

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES IN EVANGELISM AND MISSION: CASE STUDY OF THE  
CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA PRESBYTERIAN, (NKHOMA SYNOD) IN  
MALAWI

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A Dissertation Submitted to  
The Faculty of International Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Doctor of Ministry

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By  
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June 2021

International Theological Seminary  
Dissertation Approval

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Los Angeles, California

June 2021

## **ABSTRACT**

# **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES IN EVANGELISM AND MISSION: CASE STUDY OF THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA PRESBYTERIAN, (NKHOMA SYNOD) IN MALAWI**

Matalius Waiton Likhoozi

Almost every church in the world is involved in the mission of God, either to a great or small degree. They desire to reach societies on the globe with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ and make efforts in nurturing the existing members of the church. This can be mission within or mission without. The church carries the mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ from Matthew 28:18-20, to go and make disciples of all nations. Although such is the case, many churches are faced with the challenge as to how best to embark on God's mission for the salvation of humanity. Other churches have great zeal for mission but have not yielded any good results in their efforts. This is the case with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Nkhoma Synod in Malawi. This brings frustration to individuals and churches who eagerly invested their efforts and resources for the salvation of individual souls in the world. Knowledge gap in mission and proper strategies in mission creates such a challenge and renders the church fruitless in her mission activities.

Therefore, identifying the root cause of this problem and filling the gap by training the present church in biblical principles as well as preparing them to plan ahead of time for mission will help the church to expand by winning many souls for Christ. Hence, a healthy church growth would result. The training of church members for mission in an effective way is essential for the benefit and healthy growth of the church.

This ministry research study therefore is focused on exploring the importance of having an effective seminary curriculum for the training of leaders who will impact the church God sends them for ministry. Pastoral leadership role is key to a healthy growing church in Malawi. The pastor has the mandate to train the church in different fields including mission. Chapter one has incorporated all the required fields in research. Chapter two is a review of literature about the concept of mission, church growth, strategies and challenges faced in mission.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology used in the research work and the analysis and discussion of findings of questionnaires, interviews, and in general looking at the qualitative approach used for the deeper research on the topic. Chapter four focuses on the history of mission work in Malawi. It is through this history that Christianity came to Malawi by different mission bodies. In chapter five there is a discussion on biblical views on mission, evangelism and discipleship. This discusses the originality and biblical foundation of mission. It links perfectly with the topic of this dissertation. A clear explanation has been given to solidify the fact that, effective mission is based on what Jesus Christ exemplified to the world by choosing a core group of people and train them to transform the world. He selected them, was with them, they observed him, he sent

them, prayed for and with them, and he gave them authority to do mission. This explains that mission is a planned and well-intentioned act of God in the Bible. When it lacks the biblical principles and other necessary strategies the result was terrible and chaotic.

Chapter six focuses on analysis of the research findings, interpretation and drawing achievements of the research. The last chapter focuses on personal application, recommendations, and conclusion of the research done in this very important and timely subject.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DISCLAIMER**

As a non-native speaker of English, I am aware that my writing may at times lack clarity, though I have attempted to write as clearly as possible. Please note that the primary purpose of this work is to acknowledge a theory and to apply it to a particular context. I appreciate the editorial assistance I have received from various individuals but acknowledge that the responsibility for this work is entirely my own.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Martha and my children Liness, Ruth, Moses and Chiko for standing with me in prayers, and persevered for two years, as I was far away from them, doing my studies. May God receive all the glory for all this work.

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I am also grateful to Nora Comelli for accepting and offering your service as the primary editor of my work. You did this in addition to other services you offered to Malawian and ITS students, in various ways, so many to mention. May God richly repay you and provide your heart's desires together with Whittier Ladies Bible Study Group. I similarly appreciate the guidance and encouragement of my Supervisor Rev. Dr. Dharmaraj and my two readers: Rev. Dr. Mel Loucks and Dr. Talatu Bonat. Without their support I could not reach this far. Susan, the Librarian, deserves a pat at the back for her presence when I needed library resources.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Church in Malawi needs to take a leading role in addressing the issues of Evangelism and Church Growth in the country. There are many theological institutions in Malawi, training church leaders. Most of these institutions teach Evangelism and Mission work as a course that may need to be revisited so as to impact those leaders with latest strategies and burning desire in reaching out to the unreached people groups with greater zeal than now. This would bring a steady numerical growth of the church in Malawi through conversions. According to the statistics from Nkhoma Synod congregations in 2017, one can easily assume that the children born of parents within the church is a major contributing factor to the increase of church membership.<sup>1</sup> The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have tried to reach out to people in various societies with the Gospel. However, most of them targeted communities which have Christians from the mainline churches.<sup>2</sup> Some churches that are doing Evangelism and Mission may also require analyzing the way they are doing. This will help them have growing passion for Evangelism and Mission, resulting in a healthy and vibrant growing church, mainly in

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<sup>1</sup> C.C.A.P Nkhoma Synod, 2017, *Bi-Annual Conference Minutes*. (Malawi: Nkhoma Press, 2017), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Craig Ott, *Global Church Planting Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 36.

these years when receptivity to the Gospel is very evident in most African countries, with no exemption to Malawi.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The background to my doctoral research was laid as a result of my very interactive studies in Mission and Church Growth at International Theological Seminary in California- USA, which clearly opened my eyes to the need for the church to adopt some important concepts in Mission and Church Growth. I have a paradigm shift in the way mission work needs to be done in the modern times. There is a lot that the church is currently not doing when carrying out evangelism and mission. I trust this research provides framework for spiritual blessings and transformation in mission and evangelism.

Secondly, before undertaking my studies, I was involved in seminary teaching in Lilongwe, Malawi, of which Evangelism and Mission was my favorite field that I taught for eight years. When I compared my previous experience to the work I have covered in Evangelism and Mission at International Theological Seminary in California, I have realized that there is a big gap in theological training in Malawi. The main thrust in the curriculum I was teaching was on how the missionaries fulfilled their work of evangelizing the indigenous people of Malawi and the African continent in general in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are no clear guidelines as to what the church needs to do in the modern times to reach out to the unreached people within the societies and beyond. It

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<sup>3</sup> George Hunter, *The Contagious Congregation*. (Nashville: Abington Press, 1979), 20.

shows that there is information gap on how churches can do mission and evangelism in modern times.

I had personal experience in Mission work by participating in Evangelism and Mission outreaches during my pastoral years in the church from 2000-2003. I also had new experience in Mission while teaching at the Seminary from 2011-2019. The involvement of congregations in Evangelism and Mission outreaches revealed that they had very little or no tools for doing the work of God to yield good results. This was a clear indication that something more needed to be done to improve the way Evangelism and Mission should be carried out.

One important achievement this research seeks to accomplish is to develop a clear guideline (a booklet) that will help to provide the basic but necessary tools for Evangelism and Mission for all the people who will be involved in Evangelism and Mission work. For this to be achieved I have undertaken to look critically at the ‘biblical principles and practices in Evangelism and Mission.’ These principles and practices are going to be summarized to provide the actual practicality for congregational use which will eventually result in Church Planting and healthy Church Growth.

The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (Nkhoma Synod) in Malawi, is very unique in this study as its history entails that it is a Church that was established as a result of the revival in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> There are three Presbyterian denominations in Malawi that were started by three different

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<sup>4</sup> Martin, Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi. The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 1889 – 1962*. Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa. 1980, 11.

Mission bodies, but this denomination is very unique. The Mission body that found this Church was the last of the three to come to Malawi in 1881 with missionaries whose main focus was to preach the Gospel and bring people to personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior and establish a church that would be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.<sup>5</sup> Malawi being divided into three regions, South, Center and North, the Nkhoma Synod is established in the central region.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the CCAP, Nkhoma Synod, there is zeal for mission work by the congregations. However, it is not known whether seminary training in Evangelism and Mission has made any impact in the lives of the congregations' leaders who have the mandate to prepare mission teams before they go for Evangelism and Mission outreaches. It is also not clear what methods and strategies are these leaders encouraged to follow in Mission and Evangelism.

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<sup>5</sup> Martin, Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi. The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 1889 – 1962*. Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa. 1980, 11.

### 1.3 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the preparedness of mission teams and also analyze the seminary curriculum content in Mission and Evangelism so as to make recommendations for effective preparation and participation of the members of the Nkhoma Synod in mission work.

### 1.4 Goals

The main goals for this study are three-fold.

1. To help develop a basis for Church's involvement in quality training of Church leaders in Evangelism and Mission.
2. To create awareness in all the Churches in Malawi and beyond that it is the Church's God given mandate to do Evangelism and Mission by following the biblical principles and practices.
3. To help seminaries revisit and revise the curriculum content in Evangelism and Mission as a course of study in theological training.

### 1.5 Limitation of the Study

According to the purpose statement, this study has limited its focus to the actual theological content material for Evangelism and Mission and its impact to the church leaders who undergo theological training in Malawi. Reference has been made as to the kind of strategies other Christian denominations worldwide use for their successful



mission endeavors to support the argument for churches to go back to biblical principles and practices in Evangelism and Mission.

The other limitation of this study is that some selected few congregations were chosen for information collection from among the congregations which are active in mission out-reaches. This implies that even from such congregations not every member was contacted for information. Sampling was done in order to have information on how they are prepared for such outreaches.

#### 1.6 Central Research Issue

The central research issue is to analyze the curriculum content for theological training and its impact on church leaders in their future ministries in congregations. An analysis was made whether the curriculum has incorporated biblical principles and how they are applied during training of mission teams in congregations.

#### 1.7 Research Questions

1. How do church leaders prepare Mission Teams in the congregations before they are sent out for Evangelism and Mission?
2. What are the other areas that church leaders would want to include in preparing mission teams in line with the Bible?

3. What biblical principles and practices do church leaders emphasize when preparing mission teams before they are sent out for Evangelism and Mission work?

### 1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The assumption in this study is that it will be able to achieve the following things:-

- Identify the current trends of doing mission work within the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (CCAP) in Malawi and the way mission teams are prepared before mission trip. Hence the research should be able to draw a lot of ways in which congregations prepare people for mission work.
- Discover common problems encountered by church leaders in preparing mission teams before doing mission work.
- Analyze the training curriculum for Church leaders at the seminary. The study will therefore show whether there are gaps to be filled in the curriculum for Evangelism and Mission or not.
- This should help the researcher to come up with recommendations for Evangelism and Mission work by looking at the impact which the current theological training has on the church leaders.

### 1.9 Significance of Study

This study is very important because it will provide joy to those involved in mission. The fruit of their labors will be seen when many people will be coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Hence this research should help the church to do mission and evangelism in a manner that will honor God and bear much fruit in the end. Church growth will be realized due to this study. There will be joy due to successful ministry.

Lack of knowledge and poor methods of doing Evangelism and Mission can be a hindrance to church growth. Church leaders need to be equipped with the right biblical principles and methods for a successful ministry. By using biblical principles, the church should expect health growth, for God honors His word.

### 1.10 Definitions of Common Terms

The section gives in brief definitions which have been used frequently in this research program. Great details have been given within the context in which the words are used in the passages.

1. **CCAP** is a short form for Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian.
2. **CCAP Nkhoma Synod** is the name of the denomination that is the focus of this study. The full name, Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian and Nkhoma Synod is used to differentiate it from the other four synods of the same denomination, namely, Blantyre, Livingstonia, Harare and Zambia synod

3. **Synod** is a grouping of a number of congregations of the same denomination.
4. **Evangelism** is the channel and process of communicating the gospel by God's people to achieve God's mission among his people.
5. **Mission** is the goal and purpose which God has concerning his redeemed people, and what he sends them into the world to do.
6. **Missions** – These are activities which the church does to fulfill the great mission which God has for the world.
7. **DRCM** means Dutch Reformed Church Mission representing a body that came and established a church in Malawi. It is sometimes used to mean Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi depending on context.
8. **Zolamulira** – policies which are agreed upon by the denomination during its bi-annual conference, to bring uniformity within the congregations.
9. **JMTI** – Josophat Mwale Theological Institute. A name that was given to a theological seminary in honor of the first Malawian moderator of the Synod when the church became autonomous.
10. **Chichewa** – language of the people who were found in the central region of Malawi. The people who also speak this same language are called, nyanja or Amang'anja.
11. **Chewa** – It is a name for a tribe that speaks Chichewa
12. **Nkhoma Press** – A printing organization for the Nkhoma Synod

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW ON TRAINING OF PASTORS AND MISSION TEAMS**

#### **Introduction**

The underlying thesis of this study is the negative effects of doing missions and evangelism without using biblical principles and practices, affecting the growth and health of the church. The general assumption is that lack of statistical data of new believers where churches are doing mission and evangelism portrays to a large extent that there is no work being done in mission fields, since the main reason for reaching out to the world with the Gospel is that non-believers should turn away from their past and that now they are true believers who have forsaken the world and are added to the number of the old believers who are serving the Living God in the church. This chapter presents evidence that for many years, the church has not experienced tangible conversions through evangelism and missions to make the church experience steady numerical growth.

## 2.1 Church Growth

There are many definitions of a church. Some view church as a building for public Christian worship.<sup>6</sup> Others define church as a body or organization of religious believers.<sup>7</sup> Bruce Milne in his book, Know the Truth, explains two biblical images of the church throughout the Bible. “Something of essential character of the ‘people of God’ is indicated by the two OT words used for them. The first, *qahal*, means a gathering in response to God’s call (Ex. 35:1; Num. 16:26; Deut. 9:10); this word was translated as *ekklesia* (church) in the Greek version of the OT and is therefore the key to ‘church’ in the NT. The second, *edah*, means the national religious community one joined by birth (Ex. 12:3; Nu. 16:9; 31:12). The early Christians saw their historic precedent in the dynamic notion of *qahal*, the people of God assembled in response to the direct calling of God.”<sup>8</sup> It is in this regard that evangelism and missions’ endeavors desire to achieve. People must turn from their old life and realize they have been called by God to a new way of life as ‘people of God.’ There should be gatherings of the people who have received direct calling from God. Crag Ott defines church in a slightly different way by saying, “The church is a spiritual entity, conceived by the Father, built by Christ and

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<sup>6</sup> [www.compellingtruth.org](http://www.compellingtruth.org).

<sup>7</sup> [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com).

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Milne. *Know the Truth*. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, (1982), 210.

indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is God's primary vehicle for manifesting the nature of the Kingdom of God in this age and among all people."<sup>9</sup>

The church is expected to grow numerically and spiritually over the years after its establishment. When this does not happen, there must be a problem somewhere in terms of how the church is discharging her calling and mandate "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). This is in short talking about evangelism and missions which must at all cost to follow the master plan of the one who sends, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The process of making disciples needs to focus on the biblical examples given by Jesus Christ, the first and best evangelist for he was "the Emmanuel" God with us.

Church growth is understood as the expansion, planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of God's commission, to go and 'make disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:18-20).<sup>10</sup> Church growth is also defined as a discipline of understanding through biblical, sociological, historical, biological, cultural and behavioral study why churches grow or decline.<sup>11</sup> This is achieved through missions and evangelism which churches do all the time. All churches must have analysis every year to identify whether they are a dead, stagnant or living

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<sup>9</sup> Craig Ott, *Global church Planting, Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 5.

<sup>10</sup> Park Han Soo, "A Study of Missional Structures for the Korean Church for Its Postmodern Context" PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, 2008), 25.

<sup>11</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology and Principles* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 80.

church by looking at the numerical growth of the church over the years. It is envisaged that when churches engage themselves in missions and evangelism, the numbers would increase due to such efforts by the help of God. In his remarks, Dr. Premkumar Dharmaraj, Professor of Missions and Evangelism at International Theological Seminary stated that the students of church growth are supposed to integrate the eternal theological principles of God's Word concerning the expansion of the church with the best insights of contemporary social, and behavioral sciences, employing as initial framework of reference to the foundational work done by the father of Church Growth Movement, Donald McGavran.<sup>12</sup> It is therefore important to draw some elements from the definitions of church growth. The first lesson could be that it is a discipline. It means church growth can be learned and applied for effective implementation of the Great Commission. Secondly, it aims at people's healthy relationship with God whose end product will be an increase in the number of people in the church. Lastly, it is founded on the Word of God. Missions and evangelism aim at growing the church through the right channel of dividing rightly the Word of truth to those who have no relationship with God. Believers are brought into relationship to one another and with God.

Since missions and evangelism aim at expanding the church numerically and geographically, it is in the interest of the whole church, in this regard CCAP Nkhoma Synod, to know the effectiveness of the labors in the mission field.

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<sup>12</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 70.



There can be several kinds of church growth which result from different involvements including missions and evangelism. It is important to look at these kinds of growth for clear evaluation of the current scenario in what has been achieved so far by the mission and evangelism activities within the CCAP in Malawi.

### *2.1.1 Biological Growth*

Biological growth comes in as an increase to the members of the church from children born into Christian families, within the denomination, and are brought up in the fear of the Lord. MacGavran says that it is one kind of church growth which he regards as a very slow process. More importantly never will it bring the nations to faith and obedience. So, at best it is a holding action.<sup>13</sup> This is an act very evident in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. There are always many children who are baptized as infants from the Christian families. Most of these babies offer themselves later when they grow up and make a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior. Hence numerical growth is experienced biologically.

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<sup>13</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992, 71-72.

### *2.1.2 Transfer Growth*

Transfer growth is the increase of the number of people in a certain congregation at the expense of another or other congregations.<sup>14</sup> The transfer is usually done by giving disjunction certificates to those on transfer and is presented to the new congregation as a proof that the person was a Sunday school or catechumen or communicant member.

Although this is good, it is also not a strong means of growing the church. It is a loose-win situation and there is no increase in the body of Christ with this growth. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod experiences this kind of growth in that there are movements of people from one place to another for various reasons. Some move to new places in search of employment mostly in the urban areas and also in the farms. True Christians bring with them transfer letters to be recognized and welcomed at the new stations. Some transfers happen because of marriages and school going youths. When they go for secondary education, they move to the new areas with transfer letters and the same apply to marriages.

### *2.1.3 Conversion Growth*

Conversion growth takes place when those outside the church come to rest their faith intelligently on Christ Jesus and are baptized and added to the Lord in His church. This is the most desirable kind of growth which must be encouraged as a fulfillment of

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<sup>14</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 71-72.

the goal of mission and evangelism. This development results in establishment of indigenous denominations in every community of every culture. Craig Ott says, “Nothing could be clearer from a reading of the book of Acts than its emphasis on gospel proclamation as a catalyst for church planting. As the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit applies that same message to the hearts of the hearers (e.g., Acts 2:37;16;14). When they receive it through repentance and faith, they are saved and become Christians....”<sup>15</sup> It is this third growth that is desirable even in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Many churches organize revival meetings and open air crusades, preaching the gospel to both believers and nonbelievers. The main target is to reach out the nonbelievers with the great news of salvation. Evaluation of such expansive crusades shows that very few individuals were impacted with the gospel which led to their conversion from heathenism. That is why this research wants to evaluate how all these crusades are being done. Where has the church gone wrong in its approach to Evangelism and Missions?

#### *2.1.4 Expansion Growth*

Expansion growth takes place when each congregation or denomination brings more and more people to the churches, who have been converted after ministering to them the word of God through mission and evangelism. There is a combination of

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<sup>15</sup> Craig, Ott, *Global church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 47.

biological growth, transfer growth and conversion growth. This development takes place mostly where the church embarks on evangelizing the neighborhood.<sup>16</sup>

So far, we have seen how churches might grow when members of the church are vigorously involved in bringing the lost souls to the saving knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When a church experiences numerical growth more especially through mission and evangelism activities, it is a clear sign of a health church.<sup>17</sup> But when all is done and nothing changes in terms of adding the number of Christians to the existing group, something must have gone wrong, and an evaluation must be done. This is what this research wants to achieve for the CCAP Nkhoma Synod outcry for very low yielding during evangelism and missions' outreaches.

## 2. 2. Mission and Evangelism - ongoing Endeavors

In this section, I would like us to reflect the importance of mission and evangelism and that this activity will only come to an end if the whole world will confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is the mandate given to the church by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 28:18-20, to go and make disciples of all nations. This mandate still holds water because there are millions of people who have not confessed Jesus as their Savior while others have backslidden from the path of salvation.

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<sup>16</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 71-72.

<sup>17</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook. Zomba, Malawi, 8.

### *2.2.1 Definitions of Mission*

This chapter has emphasized missions as an important weapon for church growth and that it is a process that needs to be taken seriously by all churches. A church exists today as an outcome of mission. Therefore, it is important at this point in time to look at what mission is.

Many scholars have defined mission in various ways. The first definition is that Mission is witnessing to the kingdom of God. Jesus, the first and the prototype (Example) of all missionaries, came and said, “the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt. 4:17). Later on, He said: “the kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). And then in Acts 1:8, He told his followers “You will be my witness.”<sup>18</sup>

Second definition is that “Mission is the propagation (spread) of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in Him, calling them to repentance, conversion and faith in Jesus Christ. Those who respond and believe receive forgiveness of their sins, and gift of salvation and are reconciled to God.”<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, “Mission is the conscious and deliberate attempt to propagate the Christian faith among those who do not know Christ or have no personal commitment for Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 2013, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

All the definitions clearly show that mission is a deliberate effort, consciously or unconsciously to spread, propagate, preach the gospel of salvation to those outside the community of faith. Therefore, mission is the true heartbeat of a living church, looking for those that the Lord wants to save. It is both a privilege and an obligation for the members of the church to be involved in such a noble task, since salvation belongs to God. He is the one who has people at heart to be saved. So, it is very pertinent that the church would involve the owner of mission at all cost all the time. Doing something outside of God's tract will result in fruitless and vain achievements.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century mission was understood to be one (usually very important) task of the church. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new understanding gradually emerged: mission is not simply a task of the church, but rather is something central to its very nature and being. Mission is not merely about certain activities, but rather defines the very identity of the church.<sup>21</sup>

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some foundational assumptions about mission might be characterized as follows:

Mission was primarily about the geographical expansion of the Christian faith from the Christian West to the non-West. With this understanding, mission is what takes place overseas, and the church is called to play its role in this enterprise. For the church in the West this means institutional and financial support for cross-cultural missionary projects. For the church in the non-West, it means functioning as an institution parallel to

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<sup>21</sup> Stott, John. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. (Downers Grove: Illinois, 2016), 18.

mission societies that provides a container into which missions might place their converts.<sup>22</sup>

This view of mission led to a number of problems:

Firstly, mission is reduced to the task of taking the gospel to places where it is not known. This shows that there is no mission at home churches.

Secondly, mission and church are separated. There are two parallel institutional bodies. This means that mission organizations are committed to the missionary enterprise, and local congregations are communities that support it and this leads to churches without mission and missionary organizations that are not churches. Churches are reduced to their pastoral role and become introverted. Mission organizations carry on their work outside of ecclesiastical structures.<sup>23</sup>

The concept of the “*missio Dei*,” the “mission of God” provided the theological framework to incorporate the growing theological insights about church and mission. The concept of the mission of God emerged gradually in the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.,1992), 78.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.,1992), 78.

A distinction between missionary dimension and missionary intention further helps to characterize mission. Stephen Neill famously warned that if everything is mission, then nothing is mission.<sup>25</sup>

Lesslie Newbigin observes that this distinguishes “between mission as a ‘dimension’ of the Church’s whole life, and mission as the primary ‘intention’ of certain activities. Because the Church is the mission there is a missionary dimension of everything that the Church does. But not everything the Church does have a missionary intention.”<sup>26</sup>

Certain activities can be considered to have missional intention when they are “an action of the Church in going out beyond the frontiers of its own life to bear witness to Christ as the Lord among those who do not know Him, and when the overall ‘intention’ of that action is that they should be brought from unbelief to faith.”<sup>27</sup>

Every aspect of the believer’s and the believing community’s life has a missional dimension. However, not all of the church’s life and activity has a missional intention. Both of these aspects of mission are essential.

Newbigin distinguishes between mission and missions. Whereas mission is the total calling of the church to make known the gospel as it participates in God’s plan of

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<sup>25</sup> www.loimission.net & Creative Tension: The Duff Lectures, 1958, London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959, 81.

<sup>26</sup> Stott, John. *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: Illinois, 2016), 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



salvation of humanity, missions are particular enterprises within that total mission of the church. Thus, missions remain an essential part of the ongoing mission.<sup>28</sup>

“Mission,” then, is not a word for everything the church does. For the church is a worshipping as well as a serving community. The word “mission” does not cover everything God does in the world. For God the Creator is constantly active in his world in providence, in common grace and in judgment, quite apart from the purposes for which he has sent his Son, his Spirit and his church into the world. So “mission” describes rather everything the church is sent into the world to do.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.2.2 Defining Evangelism

The word evangelism is traditionally closely connected to mission. However, the two words are slightly different in that evangelism is a vehicle to fulfill God’s great plan and purpose (mission). It is one activity in addressing human needs, in this case spiritual. The other human needs are met through social services, material needs, physical, emotional and intellectual needs.<sup>30</sup> In its core, evangelism can be defined as the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuade

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<sup>28</sup> Stott, John. *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: Illinois, 2016), 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Chris Wright, International Ministries Director, Langham Partnership [www.loimission.net](http://www.loimission.net), 2014/03.

people to come to him personally and to be reconciled to God.<sup>31</sup> And to evangelize is to proclaim the good news of the victory of God's salvation. Hence evangelism is a noun denoting that activity. This is a biblical concept expressed through a Hebrew verb [basar] and a Greek word [euangelion] which is normally translated gospel denoting the content of the good news. In military matters, "to evangelize" is to bring news of the outcome of a military engagement, usually of victory (1 Sam. 31:9; 2 Sam. 18: 31; 1 Kings 1:42). The two words mission and evangelism denote the same activity of announcing and proclaiming the good of salvation to all humankind throughout the world.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, the two words evangelism and mission in this research should be understood as the goal and purpose God has among his people as he sends them out to be used simultaneously, since they describe the same activity of bringing the message of salvation to all the people.

#### *2.2.2.1 The Priority of Evangelism*

We need to understand the statement of the Lausanne Covenant that "in the church's mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary."<sup>33</sup> Of course Christians should be concerned when human beings are oppressed or neglected in any way. Anything that undermines human dignity should be an offense to us. The most

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<sup>31</sup> [www.loimission.net](http://www.loimission.net) (Integral Mission and the Great Commission – The Five Marks of Mission by Chris Wright).

<sup>32</sup> [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)>dictionary.

<sup>33</sup> [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

destructive thing of human dignity is alienation from God due to ignorance or rejection of the gospel.

In our evangelistic concern our chief burden should be for those millions of unreached peoples of the world. As the Lausanne Covenant says, “We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization.”<sup>34</sup>

#### *2.2.2.2 Redefining Evangelism*

Evangelism must not be defined in terms of results. Evangelism must not be defined in terms of methods. Evangelism must be defined only in terms of the message. Paul was “eager” to preach the gospel in Rome for he was convinced that it was God’s power for salvation (Romans 1:14-16). God’s good news is Jesus! When Philip sat down beside the Ethiopian, we read that he “told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).<sup>35</sup> Evangelism, then, is sharing the good news with others. And good news about Jesus that we announce is that he died for our sins and was raised from death, and that in consequence he reigns as Lord and Savior at God’s right hand, and has authority both to command repentance and faith, and to bestow forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit on all those who repent, believe and baptized.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

## *Conclusion*

Mission is God's purpose and goal among his people as he sends them while evangelism is an activity undertaken to fulfill the mission of God of saving the individuals who in were lost.

### *2.2.3 Types of Evangelism*

Evangelism takes different forms. There are three main ways of spreading the gospel. This depends on the situation in which people are.

#### *2.2.3.1 Pulpit Evangelism*

This is the commonest way of proclaiming the gospel. It deals with preaching to a large group of people at the same time.<sup>36</sup> However, it is the least efficient method since the preacher does not establish a personal relationship with the hearers. There is no time for questioning what the preacher says. The preacher does not know exactly the impact the gospel has done to the people.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> [www.legit.org](http://www.legit.org).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

### *2.2.3.2 Aggressive Planned Evangelism*

This is a direct opposite approach of the Pulpit Evangelism as its main advantage is eye to eye contact. Each time a Christian does one on one or door to door evangelism he shows his love both towards the Lord and the person they are trying to help. This kind of evangelism demands less time for interaction with the other person.<sup>38</sup> There is ample time for discussion on things which the person being evangelized might want to be clarified. This creates a friendly atmosphere. The only disadvantage is that it requires good preparation and good approach to break any barriers of communication and create a welcoming environment for discussions.

### *2.2.3.3 Passive Evangelism*

This is the kind of evangelism through which your life influences the lives of people within your proximity like the home, workplace, schools and the neighborhood.<sup>39</sup> The demonstration of one's daily life witnesses to the people around. Some people will be drawn to what you believe because they have seen how you behave in various circumstances.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> [www.legit.ng](http://www.legit.ng).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

### *Conclusion*

The activities of mission and evangelism are indeed on going. As reflected above, one should realize that missions and evangelism can be done in various ways throughout the world in varying degrees. Some are conscious attempts in propagating the message of salvation while others are unconsciously planned ways of life which influence others to come to the knowledge of God. It is a continuous process because some have not heard the good news because of their environment while others because of age and others because of their traditions which prevented them to be exposed to the message of salvation by trusting in the finished work of salvation. Therefore, missions and evangelism remain a tool for reaching others with the gospel of salvation without ceasing until we fulfill the commission to make disciples of all nations. Missions and evangelism also target those who have fallen away from the word of truth due to various factors. Throughout the world there are still some people who have not heard the gospel and others who have backslidden. Both categories of people need the gospel, and the church has this mandate of presenting the gospel.

### 2.3 Curriculum for Seminary/ Theological Training

Another area that needs critical analysis is the theological training to the future missionaries. The theological training has 'Missiology' as one of the major courses offered at all levels of the training whether certificate, diploma or degree level. It is this

area which must lay a strong foundation for missions and evangelism to be done in the right way according to the biblical principles to achieve great results as desired by God.

### *2.3.1 Brief History of Theological Training in Malawi*

All theological institutions were started by the churches after being established by the missionaries of various mission organizations. Therefore, there was theological training going on among the different churches. A joint theological seminary was agreed upon, for all the three Presbyterian churches of Nkhoma, Livingstonia and Blantyre after they became CCAP in 1926.<sup>41</sup> This theological college was established at Nkhoma as a central place for the other presbyteries of Blantyre and Livingstonia. This institution offered theological training in the vernacular language. Students graduated with licentiate (certificate).<sup>42</sup> The academic recognition they received enabled them to become pastors in their denominations. It was an institution which was not affiliated to any university or institution of higher learning.

It was in 1977 when the joint theological seminary was finally moved to Zomba. The transfer of the joint theological seminary from Nkhoma in the central region to Zomba in the south, though political, had an advantage of being close to the campus of Chancellor College, which is a constituent college of the University of Malawi.<sup>43</sup> Hence

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<sup>41</sup> Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 1889 – 1962*. Cape Town, South Africa, Stellenbosch University, 1980, 48.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 35.

the institution was affiliated to the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at Chancellor College for the students to be offered a recognized “Diploma in Theology.” Zomba Theological College became an ecumenical college when other evangelical churches were accepted to send their students for theological training there. Students were drawn from Blantyre Synod, Nkhoma Synod, Livingstonia Synod, Zambia Synod in Zambia, Harare Synod in Zimbabwe, Churches of Christ in Malawi, Zambezi Evangelical Church in Malawi, The Baptist Church in Malawi and the Anglican Church in Malawi.<sup>44</sup>

There was a problem of insufficient number of well trained pastors in all the churches because churches were given a limited number of students each year to be sent to Zomba Theological College for theological training, Hence to fill this gap of shortage of ministers in the churches, churches opened some theological institutions within their denominations which trained pastors at certificate level only while maintaining their ecumenism at Zomba.<sup>45</sup> These pastors were to upgrade later if they so wished, by applying to Zomba theological College, seconded by their churches.

### *2.3.2 Establishment of Board for Theological Studies*

Lecturers for Zomba Theological College were recruited from the member churches and had to go back to their churches after their contract was over. It was these

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<sup>44</sup> Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi* 11.

<sup>45</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi, 35.



theological lecturers who felt the need to have a unifying body for all theological institutions in Malawi. The idea looked brilliant, and audience was sought with the faculty of theology at Chancellor College. Hence a special secretariat was formed to coordinate activities surrounding theological training.<sup>46</sup> This included curriculum development, examinations and awarding of Diplomas. All interested institutions had to apply for affiliation to the Board.

By the year 2018, the following institutions were under Board for Theological Studies:- Zomba Theological College (Ecumenical), ST. Peters Major Seminary (Catholic), Leonard Kamungu Theological College (Anglican), College for Christian Ministries (Anglican), Josophat Mwale Theological College (CCAP Nkhoma Synod), Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (Zambezi Evangelical Church), Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM).<sup>47</sup> Therefore all theological institutions offered courses which were uniform in all the theological institutions. It is within this curriculum that Missiology was one of the courses. This brings me to the fact that all theological institutions should benefit from my research for their churches to participate in missions and evangelism activities by following the biblical principles in evangelism and missions and bring healthy growth to their churches.

Some of the institutions which were under the Board for Theological Studies have become private universities, and these are Josophat Mwale Theological Institute, which is

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<sup>46</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 36.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

a faculty of theology under Nkhoma University; College for Christian Ministries is a fully fledged university with additional programs under the new name of Lake Malawi Anglican University, St. Peters Major Seminary is under the Catholic University and lastly Zomba Theological College. All these institutions are registered and accredited by National Council for Higher Education in Malawi (NCHE).<sup>48</sup>

However, institutions like Josophat Mwale and Zomba Theological College have adopted the same curriculum they used under Board for Theological Studies. Regardless of the new standards and affiliation, the institutions are still using the old material in missions and evangelism. Hence this research is important to improve and follow biblical principles in missions and evangelism.

### *2.3.3 Curriculum Content in Missiology*

The content in Missiology should be able to inform readers whether it addresses evangelism and missions in its outline or not. It is high time that pastors and all theological students should be trained in the right way by addressing issues of missions with urgency and biblically focused to achieve great results in church planting and growth.

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<sup>48</sup> A-Z universities in Malawi 2020. [www.4icu.org](http://www.4icu.org).

In this section attention is directed towards the material which has been in use in theological studies in theological institutions in Malawi both evangelical and catholic as they were under Board for Theological Studies in their training for many years.

#### *2.3.3.1 Course Introduction*

Missiology Course has a very good introduction. Most students meet the subject for the first time and are anxious to learn about it. The introductory remarks clear the mist by clarifying many terms by defining them such as missiology, missions and other relevant terms. History of mission has been outlined very well. This provides a good transition from what the students already know from Church History. The two courses are closely connected in many cases because Mission History is also Church History.<sup>49</sup> The only difference is that Missiology emphasizes on the evaluation of the actual growth of the church over the years without too much emphasis on when (years) the events took place.

#### *2.3.3.2 Table of Contents for Missiology*

Let me give the actual outline of the topics and summary of the contents in each topic. Firstly, let us review work for the first semester.

### MISSIOLOGY SEMESTER 1

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<sup>49</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 2013, 3.

### Table of Contents

Lesson One.....	Introduction to Mission
Lesson Two .....	Worldwide Mission in African Perspective
Lesson Three.....	The Source of Mission
Lesson Four.....	The Biblical Basis of Mission
Lesson Five .....	Motives And Goals for Mission
Lesson Six .....	Ways and Means of Doing Mission Work
Lesson Seven .....	Introduction to Historical Mission
Lesson Eight .....	The Roman Catholic Missions – AD 1600-1787

#### FURTHER READINGS:

- a. Mission and Church in Malawi by Martin Pauw Page 18ff
- b. Mainstream Christianity by John Weller, Jane Linden Pages 33-46; 127
- c. History of the Church in Africa by Jonathan Hildebrandt Page 111

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#### 2.3.3.3 Short Summary of the Content

The table of contents given above shows the work which students are supposed to cover in one semester, and it discusses mission work backward looking. The focus is

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<sup>50</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 2013, 12.

mainly on how missionaries to Malawi invested their time and energy working for the Lord. Much of the time is spent on historical facts to help students align themselves with mission work. As an introduction to mission work, this is a good beginning from known to unknown.

I have chosen two striking areas from the above table of contents. These include the biblical basis for mission and ways and means of doing mission. These two topics firstly, discuss with emphasis that God is the source of mission, and that the Bible has some passages which talk about God's mission. Then there is a discussion on ways and means of doing mission work. Ways of doing mission include, preaching, Bible translation, education, radio communication, diaconia (service) and koinonia (fellowship).<sup>51</sup> There is so much that the early missionaries did in order to win people to Christ and establish churches in Malawi. These missionaries had varying degrees in their emphasis and also in their approach to the African communities in mission work. They followed what worked for them to establish churches. Much as I could appreciate the content in this area, its practical application by the members of the church who are engaged in Evangelism and Mission nowadays, looks difficult. It is a theoretical material on how missionaries established churches in and beyond the borders of Malawi. At the same time there is no in-depth material focusing on Jesus as a pioneer missionary from whom we can learn biblical principles and practices in our generation. The picture which

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

students have as they go along with the course is that mission work is for the people from the West. In other words, mission work seems to have come to an end with the establishment of churches in Malawi because of that poor picture they get during training in mission.

Topics 7 and 8 discuss the whole issue of the history of mission of the Roman Catholic Church and other missionary bodies on how they started mission work, challenges and victories they had in mission work. Much of the information is suitable in Church History. The information that could empower the seminary students today could be on how the church can participate in mission in our days by exploring some possibilities and challenges as a guide to doing mission work with an informed mind.

## MISSIOLOGY SEMESTER 2

### Table of Contents

Lesson 1.....	Secularization, Christian Nominalism And Evangelism
Lesson 2.....	Contextualisation and Inculturation
Lesson 3.....	The Modern Missionary Movement
Lesson 4.....	Missions in Malawi
Lesson 5.....	The World Wide Missionary Task
Lesson 6.....	Ecumenism: Unity for Mission

These are the topics which are covered in the second semester. The first topic defines the need for continued evangelism and mission in African continent although there is a claim of growing numbers of Christians.<sup>52</sup> The second topic analyses the gap that exists between the way Christians in Africa and those of the West differ and ask for a need to revisit how Christianity would be brought down according to the context and culture of the people.<sup>53</sup>

The third topic which deals with the Modern Missionary Movement speaks about the ways the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionaries organized themselves for mission work. There is no single mention of the 21<sup>st</sup> century missionary movements in this section which necessitates revision of the curriculum.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Board for Theological Studies in Malawi Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 2013, 1-4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Topic number 4, Mission in Malawi brings back the history of mission work in Malawi from the first visit of Dr. David Livingstone in 1859. The next topic worldwide missionary task goes back to what has already been covered in topic one about the need to for continued evangelism and mission work throughout the world. The only emphasis here is that the whole world should be regarded as mission field. There is neither Christian nor heathen land; the whole world needs the word of God more than ever before.

The last topic deals with the need for churches to be united for mission. The issues for unity were not so much for evangelism and mission, but to speak to the secular authorities with one voice. Currently, there is a lot that churches have violated in relation to working together as a body of Christ. There was comity agreement, which gave churches geographical boundaries to avoid undesirable and unholy competition among churches. That has been disrupted by churches. Within the CCAP denomination, each of the three denominations in Malawi is free to extend its ministry anywhere into the jurisdiction of another CCAP area. Therefore, the whole curriculum does not hold in place the concrete foundation for coherence and empowerment of theological students to embark on Evangelism and Missions with full throttle from a biblical perspective. There is still too much historical knowledge gained without answering the questions on how the church should address the mandate of Evangelism and Mission by using biblical principles and practices.

In conclusion, this section has revealed that the curriculum does not address the issue of Evangelism and Missions using the biblical principles and practices for



Evangelism and Mission in the theological training of those pastors expected to lead the congregations they will serve, in the vital task of leading many people to Christ through the process.

## 2.4. Preparation of Church Members for Mission Outreach

When we look at Missions as a spiritual warfare, it is evident that preparation is vital in order to be full armed, equipped with the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18), for a successful battle ahead. In this section, we are going to analyze how teams in different churches are supposed to prepare before they embark on mission work.

### *2.4.1 Resource Mobilization*

The first thing which is critical for mission trips is the much-needed resources for the work. These include human and material resources. It is evident that under resourced mission teams face unprecedented challenges.

### *2.4.2 Human Resource*

Sometimes this becomes a big challenge to identify people who are available and teachable. This leads to inconsistencies in the members who go out for mission work. When one goes out for mission trip for the first time, it is like a pilot phase and an orientation to what happens in the mission field. If they go a second time, they will do the work with good experience. But it remains a challenge that people who might be gifted

and mature spiritually are not available for mission work. This happens because people do missions and evangelism for different motivations. Without the presence of well gifted and experienced people in the team, many things are not accomplished more especially ministries which require such kind of people like good preachers, intercessors and leading people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

#### *2.4.3 Financial Resources*

The second part of resources is the finance required for the mission trip to be possible at the expected time. There are many churches which fund mission trips but the team is requested sometimes to raise additional money to the budget. This sometimes becomes a challenge in many churches if the leaders do not have a heart for Evangelism and Missions. So, preparation for mission trips involves a number of areas. The amount of money required covers transport for the team, food for the team, and other expenses while in the mission field. Other churches plan for infrastructure development. They might need to go with tents in the first place but later decide to build a permanent building in the mission field. This happens in order to assist the new members in faith.

#### *2.4.4 Equipment*

Some churches have reliable equipment while others hire the equipment. This also calls for funds to own or hire. Public address system is a must when people go out for Evangelism and Missions. Many people who are reluctant to attend the rallies are reached with the gospel while still in their homes. This is very important for reaching out to

masses of people in the area. Although this is done, it is with biblical principles and practices that all evangelism and mission activities become meaningful and live in the hearts of the people who participate in the event.

#### *2.4.5 Regular Prayer Meetings*

This is an area which is very important in preparation for Evangelism and Missions. As a spiritual battle, prayer is a tool that helps members to discern what is required of them. They are well prepared spiritually by spending time praying for themselves, the needs of the trip, the area to be reached with the gospel, receptivity of the hearts, wisdom in handling issues in the mission field and so on.

However, many churches do not take this area seriously. People go out for missions as a social trip to visit new areas and to relax from the daily routines at home. This becomes a problem in the mission field in that the goal for the trip is not met because of such people who have no vision for the trip. This is one of the causes for the negative experience of having no numerical growth for a number of years while churches still do mission work every year. There are many challenges churches meet in the mission field which must be dealt with by people who are spirit filled. Even preaching that convicts people comes from preachers who are grounded in the word and are spirit filled. This calls for serious devotions as the team is preparing for the mission trip. This practice should be regarded a routine for the Missions team. They should always be ready and saturated in their minds with burning desire to see the church growing.

#### *2.4.6 Planning Sessions*

There is a “Missions Committee” wherever the church is actively involved in missions. It is necessary for these members to meet regularly and plan on how the missions’ trip will be organized, having a clear vision of what the missions’ trip will accomplish. These meetings should intensify as the days draw near for the mission trip.

#### *2.4.7 Orientation Sessions*

For a successful mission trip, there is need for all those going during this trip to have good orientation about the area for missions. This is a very crucial exercise and should be undertaken seriously. The members must know the culture of the people in the area well in advance so that they know how to approach the members in the community. The Bible says, “Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves. So be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves (Matt. 10:16).” Every society is different in the way certain things are done. If the group does not know about this, the gospel loses its power and an opportunity for evangelism is missed. The group must also be oriented on the beliefs of the people so that issues will be addressed from a biblical point of view and from known to unknown.

Another area that requires orientation is the distribution of various tasks to be done during the mission trip. The members must be aware of the roles they are going to play in the mission field. The tasks include master of ceremonies, preachers with their allocated times to minister, ushers and their specific tasks, intercessors, meal preparation group, follow-up team and so on. This is important because members start preparation for

the given task well in advance. Many churches do allocate tasks when they are already in the mission field which sometimes becomes a challenge in that some other people are not given the tasks according to their gifts and abilities. There is not enough time to pray for God's intervention as one is doing the task. This affects, to a large extent, the effectiveness of the whole evangelism and mission outreach. This is a worrisome trend whereby not many people commit their lives to become Christians.

## 2.5 Strategies Used in Missions and Evangelism

Churches use different evangelism strategies with a desire to draw people to the attention of the gospel for their salvation. Different people have different likings and are motivated to things which speak to their minds. It is with this view in mind that Evangelism and Missions organizers use different approaches for calling people to the gospel. In this section, we are going to reflect at some of the strategies which churches use when they go for mission trip.

### *2.5.1 Preaching*

Preaching is a very important business. We read from Mark 1:14 that immediately after his baptism and His victory over temptations in the wilderness, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. The word for preaching in this passage is a Greek word which translates, "to proclaim" or "to herald," or "to cry

aloud.”<sup>55</sup> The main purpose is to call people to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand as Jesus proclaimed during His first sermon (Mark 1:14). Therefore, to preach is to proclaim the good news of salvation. Preaching takes different forms and below are some few examples of preaching the word of God to audiences.

#### *2.5.1.1 Open Air Preaching*

The gospel message is delivered to the people who gather at one place listening to one person (the preacher) talking or pleading with them the message from God. Even those who are far from the spot are reached with the gospel through the public address system (PA). Some have been drawn to the saving knowledge of Jesus while away from the place where the message is being preached. It is during this time that those who are convicted with the word surrender their lives to Jesus Christ to become their Lord and personal Savior. Those who have been touched by the gospel can be invited to openly and publicly declare and confess Jesus as their Savior.

It is a tradition which makes following up new converts easy and help them grow spiritually. The only danger is that many people do not truly grow and mature in faith. The first reason why many people still remain babies in spiritual matters is that they do not seriously give up the worldly things. Lack of true commitment and lack of discipleship makes them fall back into their old ways of life. But this is a good strategy of

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<sup>55</sup> [www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org).

reaching people with the gospel. It is also at the same time when the sick are prayed over their sicknesses for healing. The churches which are doing Evangelism and Missions need to consider using people according to their gifts. This can be one of the areas where churches miss the opportunity of winning people to Christ if nothing is done in this area of praying for the sick.<sup>56</sup>

#### *2.5.1.2 The Jesus Film*

The Jesus film is another evangelistic tool for bringing many people to hear the gospel more especially in the rural areas. Many people are drawn to watch the film because they regard the Jesus film as a form of entertainment. But many people are touched by the sufferings of Jesus for the sins of the world. This makes them turn away from the ways of the world and follow Him. The film is accompanied by comments from the speakers who narrate the actual meaning of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. This therefore is another form of preaching to the crowds of people.

#### *2.5.1.3 One on One or Door to Door Evangelism*

Sometimes the mission team prepares to go into people's homes to preach the gospel on one to one basis. They go in small groups so that the owner of the house would not be overwhelmed by a large group. This kind of preaching targets those who are

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<sup>56</sup> Philip Hogan, *Church Planting Methods, Lifeshare Communications*, DeSoto, Texas, 1984, 51.

nonbelievers in the villages. The reactions differ from one person to another. Some are welcome while others are denied the opportunity to share the gospel.

This strategy gives opportunity for building a relationship. The atmosphere is so natural for asking questions where one does not understand. The nonbeliever is not carried by emotions but understands the conversation and follows through to a point where he/she can finally make an informed decision to become a Christian. Many people who turn to the Lord in this way become very strong Christians because they are well disciplined.

#### *2.5.2 Diakonia (Deeds of mercy)*

When Missions teams go to areas for the second or third times, they know the challenges which the people face in that particular area. They can notice shortfalls which they easily alleviate. The best examples include, helping elderly people with thatching their roofs, smearing the houses, digging toilets for them, give them basic necessary things like clothes, blankets, food etc. This is an evangelistic tool which leaves a mark of love and concern by the people who preach the true gospel.

Many other groups consider helping orphans at various levels. Some churches help with food provisions for a longer period. Others support school going children by giving them fees and school materials. These gestures of mercy attract many people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ.



### *2.5.3 Gospel Music Explosion*

Some Evangelism and Missions teams use choir and singing groups to stir the hearts of the people in the area with spiritual melodies. The group can sing while going round the villages drawing the attention of the people with beautiful voices and the message of salvation in their songs. Since many Malawians like music, they are drawn to the place where the crusade is taking place.

### *2.5.4 Infrastructure Development*

There are some churches which concentrate on erecting church buildings as soon as they have some few converts. They desire that these members should not have the burden of thinking of where to meet for worship services. They believe that people will be drawn to the church because of the building they have built. This was also in the mindset of the early missionaries who felt that by creating a beautiful place, it was a way of bringing civilization and attraction to the people around the place.

### *2.5.5 Education Centers*

Some churches have started nursery and primary schools within the premises of the church. Some learners use the church building to acquire their knowledge. It is one of the best ways to inculcate in the children awareness of the fear of God and the doctrines which the church follows.

## *Conclusion*

Although the strategies mentioned above are used by some congregations in Evangelism and Missions, the research has shown that they are underutilized. Most of the churches use preaching from the pulpit as the only way of disseminating the gospel truth to the public all the time. The variations could help grasping the attention of the people by using the strategy that could touch their hearts. This should be one of the reasons for low number of people to be converted at the end of Evangelism and Missions outreaches among the CCAP Nkhoma Synod churches.

## 2.6 Major Challenges Encountered in Evangelism and Missions

The work of evangelism faces many challenges as spiritual warfare. All groups which come back from mission trips express dissatisfaction in terms of what they wanted to achieve because of some unpredictable situations. Highlighted below are the common challenges which mission teams meet in the field.

### *2.6.1 Cultural Practices and Traditional Beliefs*

For successful evangelism and mission work, all teams must be thoroughly prepared spiritually. In Malawi, societies have cultural practices which are not easy to uproot if you use human force. Some societies practice traditional dances which are evil in nature. Mission teams have to know in advance what the cultural practices of the area are so that they would pray in advance for God's intervention. In such societies the

groups need to notify the traditional leaders well in advance so that the leaders would stop any cultural activities planned to disrupt evangelism and mission work. We have Nyau masked society which opposes Christianity, and it regards itself as a religion. Of late they have called themselves “The Church of Aaron.” It is a society that relies very much on magic for its activities. Prayer is a weapon which teams use to counteract these evil forces.

Magic and witchcraft is common belief in many societies where Christianity has not made deep root. The evangelism and mission teams must be aware of such belief before going to such areas to intensify their prayers and always use intercessors during the whole period of evangelism and mission. Sometimes equipment such as the PA and the Jesus Film stops working because of such evil forces against the gospel. This demands good spiritual preparation as soldiers of Christ.

In some other cultures, Christianity is regarded as a religion of the white people and that the Africans have their own religions through whom God understands them as he did with their forefathers. Groups are coming openly to speak against Christianity are winning a lot of people to their group.

#### *2.6.2 Unfriendly Traditional Leaders*

Traditional leaders play great role in granting permission to outsiders to do any activity. Evangelism and mission work need the blessing of the traditional leaders. Any team must inform the traditional leaders in advance and a reminder must be sent as the days draw near for their confirmation.

There are other traditional leaders who are involved very much in the traditional practices and would not allow their society to disintegrate due to a new religion. They make sure that the doors are closed to any Christian practices by making all kinds of excuses. This becomes a challenge to the mission teams for protocols must be observed.

### *2.6.3 Unhealthy Competition*

There is sometimes competition between churches within the same area. They regard any other evangelism and mission endeavors as a move for sheep stealing. This unhealthy competition retards church growth because those who are not committed to the existing church for whatever reasons will continue to be without a church. In some cases the existing church plans activities in the same area to frustrate the program of the new church. This is unhealthy competition since it is the duty of the church to point people to Christ, the owner of the church, not to our denomination. They might use their members to disrupt the meetings of the new church. These efforts evil and do not profit the kingdom of God. So when asking for permission from traditional leaders, these sentiments must be aired out so that it is these leaders who will help resolve any issues that might arise in the process of evangelizing and area.

Some churches gain fame and popularity because of handouts. They provide the basic need of the people when they come to an area for missions and evangelism. If the other team comes, people will attend the gatherings with a hope of getting something in the end. If that does not happen, then you have no members for your church.

#### *2.6.4 Inadequate Financial Resources*

Some evangelism and mission teams fail to accomplish their goals because of lack of the needed funds to do the work. Most churches raise mission trip funds during an occasion specifically for that. This helps members to know where they are channeling their finances. The whole program would be disclosed to the church for the members to donate money according to the needs of the mission team. In other churches, the leadership does not encourage members to give towards the mission trip. The team might be in the mission field for a longer period in order to finish the work they have planned. They might have a project such as building a house or church which takes time for completion. Some teams are frustrated by their church leadership who do not have positive attitude towards mission work.

#### *2.6.5 Lack of Committed and Dedicated Team Members*

It is sometimes a challenge that people who are reliable in mission work might not be willing to accompany the team all the time. The evangelism and mission team needs to have people who are diverse in their gifts and spiritual maturity. When such people have given excuses, the whole trip becomes a frustration because some areas which would need the expertise of those who have made excuses will be a challenge to the team members who have gone. There should be good preachers, singers, conveners, intercessors, administrators, counselors, teachers and technical people to operate the equipment. Such a combination would bring good results, each one doing what is expected for him or her. When evangelism and mission work are carried out without such

a combination, it becomes a social trip to fulfill the program which the church had on its calendar. The end result will be that conversion will be a forgotten thing since no one will be so serious in reaching out to people with the gospel.

#### *2.6.6 Secularism and Unbelief*

It is an undeniable fact that we are living in a global village. Societies all over the world are changing every day. Much of the things which are influencing the world, deal with disruption of the fabric of the societies and faith. Many people now take Christianity lightly. Therefore, it is becoming a challenge to see that the people who made commitment to the Lord last year have now gone back to the ways of the world. It is hard to bring these people who have backslidden back to the faith. This retards the growth of the church in the mission field. It is therefore necessary that the church would think of long-term mission trips in which some people would be left in the mission field to disciple those who have accepted the gospel and are serious in their walk with Christ Jesus.

#### *2.6.7 The Environment*

Mission teams sometimes experience the challenge of the surrounding area for camping and evangelism site. It might be far away from basic necessities like drinking water. The accommodation might also be not be good for the health of those who have come for evangelism and missions. There might also be a problem of security of the team members when doing evangelism.

## CONCLUSION

The above reasons have been analyzed as challenges which mission teams meet in Malawi. Some of the challenges are easy to resolve while others are spiritual in nature and require God's intervention through prayers.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section explains various ways and strategies used in data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the responses, and evaluating issues arising from the responses. The procedures involved in this survey include identification of the sampling, designing questionnaire, use of the questionnaire to obtain relevant information, and conducting qualitative interviews to get the information.

Research methodology is defined as a philosophy or general principle that guides one's research. It is an overall approach to studying a topic and includes the tool and issues one needs to think about.<sup>57</sup>

The topic for my research is “Biblical principles and practices: Case Study of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Nkhoma Synod) in Malawi.” This research has been undertaken using different methods. The first is qualitative method. The researcher chose this method because it is designed in a manner that it helps reveal the behavior and perception of a target group or audience with reference to a particular topic.<sup>58</sup> This

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<sup>57</sup> Catherine Dawson, *Introduction to Research Methods* (Oxford: How to Books Ltd, 2009), 14.

<sup>58</sup> Catherine Dawson, p.14.



method helped the researcher to get the true perception of the people in the church embarking on mission work and also in the mission field on the best ways of doing mission work. The results of qualitative method are more descriptive, and the inferences can be drawn quite easily from the data that is obtained.<sup>59</sup> Qualitative' methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant.<sup>60</sup> This is what the researcher wanted to find out from people on how mission is being done and their views if they see any need for improvement. Suffice to say that the research has revealed important information required to help the researcher answer important questions on how Mission affects church growth. As an interactive process of interpretation in which readers seek the meaning of the text in its original context, the research has received meaningful interpretation.<sup>61</sup> This is a very important stage in order to come up with the true reflection of what people think would be the best ways of doing mission work. This is the major reason why the researcher opted for this method as a priority. Within qualitative method, the researcher wanted to use other important methods such as one-on one method. As already indicated above, this failed due to Covid Pandemic. The researcher desired to conduct in-depth interviews as one of the most common qualitative research methods. Personal interview would be

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013), 38.

<sup>61</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013), 111.

carried out with one respondent at a time. This is purely a conversational method and invites opportunities to get details in depth from the respondent. One of the advantages of this method is that it provides a great opportunity to gather precise data about what people believe and what their motivations are. It is purely believed that the sentiments on paper still reflect what could be expressed during discussions.

Several methods of data collection were used, namely, the designing of the questionnaire with open and closed questions. Interviews were conducted using specific relevant questions. These questionnaires were sent to fifteen (15) congregations of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Distance from the researcher and congregations which have great involvement in mission was the criteria used in this sampling, in order to find true reflection on how churches use biblical principles in evangelism and mission work. The sampling was deliberately designed to incorporate members from a cross section of church members who are involved in mission. Since Malawian societies are patrilineal, women and the youth are sidelined in many church engagements when it comes to decision making. Therefore, it was mandatory that these should have a voice in analyzing mission work in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Fortunately, Lilongwe, Mpando and Likuni Presbyteries have congregations which are zealous for mission work. The proximity of the congregations to each other gave easy access to the research assistant to obtain information.

The design was that each congregation would be given four questionnaires. Being gender sensitive, one questionnaire was given to women, one to the youth, another to the leadership (church elder or deacon) and the last to the chairperson of mission committee

at congregational level. Using the same questions from the questionnaire, the assistant researcher was asked to conduct personal interviews with pastors and some prominent members of each congregation. However, since the research was conducted when the pandemic was at the peak in Malawi in 2020, interviews were not possible. Therefore, the findings are purely based on the report from the questionnaires. Information obtained from respondents was analyzed, interpreted and facts were established.

### 3.1 Research Instrument

The researcher served as a primary research instrument in conducting this study. He served the Lord in various capacities in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod for twenty years as an ordained minister. He served as a minister at a congregation for three years (200-2003) and in the office of Evangelism at Namoni Katengeza Church Lay Training Center, owned by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, for four years (2005-2009), and later as a lecturer at Josophat Mwale Theological Institute for eight years (2011-2019). He is therefore an insider in this research through his observations and participation in many mission outreaches and activities.

The research assistant, who was trusted to collect the information, was another trusted person. He has the responsibility of managing Mission department of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. He plays a key role in co-coordinating mission activities with congregations. He relates well with mission teams and respondents in the congregations. Hence at the end, a credible and reliable result was obtained.

### 3.2 Data Collection

Information was collected through responses from members of churches. A total of forty respondents from ten congregations provided useful and relevant information for the research. The data was collected through the means of the questionnaires. The purpose was to obtain practical and relevant information from the respondents so as to blend it with the theoretical information obtained from published sources such as books and the trusted websites over the internet. Covid 19 has been a great setback to the research findings since the country was in a long lockdown to stop the spread of the virus. Hence, some people who were targeted to provide information on the subject were unable to do so. However, the outcome is so convincing that even if many more people could be consulted, they could not change the findings reflected in this research.

### 3.3 Research Methods

In this study, primary research has been applied right from the introduction of the topic. This was clearly shown by the observations the researcher made during many mission trips he participated. When he was a church minister, he had keen interest in evangelism and mission. He is therefore an eyewitness and a participant to the successes and the challenges that he is researching. He is a true insider, who was born and brought up within the church of which he writes now.

A qualitative questionnaire was designed in order to affirm and verify the probability of inadequate training in biblical principles and practices in Evangelism and Mission. Twenty questionnaires were distributed in urban congregations and another twenty questionnaires were distributed in rural congregations. Statistical data was asked to evaluate frequencies in the trainings, their knowledge of biblical principles and visits which individuals made to participate in mission trips for five years.

In the same questionnaire other questions were formulated to establish from the members of the denominations their opinions on how best evangelism and mission should be done to win more and more souls to the Lord. The questionnaire was well formulated to deal with all issues of training, the kind of training, members' participation, and short falls in preparations, use of gifts and the average time which members spend in the mission' field. All these are important areas in establishing how serious or casual, the members are prepared in evangelism and mission' trips by their church leaders.

The researcher has chosen this method because it is designed in a manner that it helps to reveal the behavior and perception of a target group or audience with reference to a particular topic.<sup>62</sup> This has helped the researcher to get the true perception of the people in the church who embark on mission work. There is also a reflection on what is done in the mission field. The results of qualitative method are more descriptive, and the inferences are drawn quite easily from the data that is obtained.<sup>63</sup> Qualitative' methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often

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<sup>62</sup> Catherine Dawson, *Introduction to Research Methods*, Oxford: How to Books Ltd, 2009, 14.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 14.

from the standpoint of the participant.<sup>64</sup> This was very important for this research because it has helped the researcher to answer important questions on how people look at doing mission work without proper training in biblical principles and practices in Evangelism and Mission that must affect church growth negatively.

The researcher believes that any effect has a cause. The fruitless efforts in evangelism and mission by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod should have a cause. The cause is then traced back to the kind of training which ministers undertake during their seminary years. Ministers have a great role in training and preparing congregational members for evangelism activities and mission. As an interactive process of interpreting the current condition of affairs, interviewing certain members of the church who understand the situation has helped this research to have a meaningful interpretation.<sup>65</sup> This is a very important stage in order to come up with the true reflection of what people think would be the best ways of doing mission work. This is the major reason why the researcher opted for this method as a priority.

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<sup>64</sup> Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013, 38.

<sup>65</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Los Angeles, SAGE, 2013, 111.

### 3.4. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire had sixteen (16) questions, structured in such a manner that respondents would answer closed and open-ended questions. (*See Figure 1*). The questions were drawn to test the hypothesis and they targeted training sessions which mission teams had, what kind of training, who facilitated the training, the content of the training material, frequency of the members to mission field, finding what mission teams regard as most important things during field preparation. Other questions focused on how members are identified for mission participation and the duration the team stays in the field. Above all the research wanted to establish members' knowledge of biblical principles in evangelism and mission. Therefore there were questions leading respondents to provide true information according to their practical experiences in evangelism and mission. There was a section which had questions which appealed for useful suggestions on how to make evangelism and mission efforts a success.

### 3.5. The Sample of the Research

The sampling for this study was mission team members and church members. The researcher and research assistant was gender sensitive in the selection of the participants. He selected both male and female respondents ranging from 20 – 50 and over. A total of seventy five (75) respondents were targeted. Unfortunately, only forty (40) returned the questionnaires although with delays to given due dates for submission. The participants were randomly selected from the congregations in Lilongwe, Likuni and Mpando

Presbyteries. The details of the sampling comprised of 10 women, 10 youth, 10 elders/deacons and 10 chairpersons of mission committees. The congregations chosen were to represent urban and semi-urban set up. However, the congregations which submitted the questionnaires are mostly urban congregations but coming from different presbyteries. Presbyteries differ in their administration. Therefore, the congregations' involvement in mission would be determined by the ministry focus of the congregation as well as the presbytery.

Confidentiality of the respondents was given a high priority. On the questionnaires, respondents' names were left open ended for their confidentiality. Respondents had an option of disclosing their names or not. This was deliberately done because other respondents favor to be pseudonymous while others want to be known. Therefore, 25% of the respondents opted for disclosure of their names while 75% did not.

The authenticity of the findings is also found in the names of congregations where the research was conducted. This shows that data was collected from a real place and real people were contracted for data collection. This takes away the feeling of some research which are done while someone is seated right in his office. The data was immediately sent to the researcher in the United States by DHL. This is also part of confidentiality. There has been and will continue to be confidentiality to the research findings throughout.

The research papers have been kept securely placed in a locked drawer. The information has also been installed in a computer with a password for security and to avoid loss of information.



### 3.6. Interviews

A total of seventy-five (75) respondents were originally targeted to be interviewed. The detail is as follows: fifteen (15) pastors, and sixty (60) lay leaders and church members. As already explained above, Covid 19 affected the interview process. All the fifteen pastors were not available for interviews due to the same reason of high infection of many people by Covid 19 pandemic. Therefore, out of the sixty (60) expected respondents, only forty (40) returned their questionnaires.

### 3.7 Library Research

The study has used the secondary resources which involved the collection of information from studies which were conducted by another research on the subject. Therefore with the available literature in form of library books, journal articles and trusted internet sites, evidence on the need to follow biblical principles and practices in Evangelism and Missions, was collected, for a healthy growing church to be established. Much information was also found in African writers who have tried to write on the issue although not directly in the same line of thought.

The books gave a good number of reasons why, in the past some organizations and churches failed in mission. These were grasped and taken into consideration with a view that they might be some of the reasons why the CCAP Nkhoma Synod is not faring well in mission. However, this research has filled the gap which was there in the

literature by coming up with new discoveries and recommendations for successful mission work.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

Data obtained from respondents is divided into three main categories. The first is qualitative analysis and it analyses the representation of gender in the work of evangelism and mission. This also includes the opportunities for training offered to them.

#### *Qualitative Analysis 1*

The table below summarizes the research findings by sampling the responses to the questions from the questionnaire.

Table A.

Gender	Number	Trainings	Positions in mission committee	Frequency in outreach attendance
Male	21	3 members only	Members	Many times
Female	19	2 members only	Members	Many times

The table above represents the involvement and participation of men and women in mission. The number of respondents has a good gender balance of 52.5 % males and 47.5% females. This is a good ground for getting correct information in mission. The

Malawian society trusts women so much. It is women who have the responsibility of choosing traditional community leaders (chiefs) because of their honesty. It is therefore very important to have this balance for credibility of the research findings.

It has also been noted that few respondents stated that they had some sort of training in biblical principles in evangelism and mission. Therefore only 7.5% of men and 5% of women assumed they had trainings before going out for mission outreach. When asked to state the biblical principles in mission, all of them failed to state these biblical principles. Therefore, there was 0% training in biblical principles in mission. It is also pleasing to note that both genders were fully involved in mission for a period of more than two years. Some went for mission outreaches for ten good years. This has revealed that there is indeed lack of seriousness in mission since these members do mission work without the required knowledge. Both men and women serve as members of mission committees in various capacities.

### *Qualitative Analysis 2*

The table below shows the actual work and involvement of the members and their perception of the challenges, successes and shortfalls in mission.

Table B

Gender	Preparation	Challenges in preparation	Challenges in mission field	Successes in Mission
Male	Meetings, prayers, fund	Finances,	Bad roads,	People coming

	raising, teachings	coordination, equipment, language	transport, equipment, good preachers	to Christ, good attendance
Female	Prayers, teachings	Finances, equipment, coordination,	Poor reception, transport, equipment, poor people	Trip is done, many people come to Jesus,

The table above shows that mission is done through many challenges. Within this framework, it is sad to know that the general complaint is about finances. All respondents, male and female, expressed finances as a major setback in mission. One wonders how this could be true because all mission teams are very big in size. They need a lot of money for transport, food and other essentials in the mission field. If few people could go and do one on one mission, they could cut down expenses required for a large group. It is also sad to note that mission teams stay in the mission field for a very short time to leave a lasting spiritual impact among the people. All respondents have indicated that they go for mission on Fridays and come back home on Sunday. There are no follow-ups to the new believers. There is no one who is left to disciple the new believers. The research has revealed this as one of the major setbacks to successful mission. The church cannot operate in this way and believe that some members will be added to the church.

### *Qualitative Analysis 3*

The third qualitative analysis centered on the seminary curriculum. The table of contents from the curriculum, clearly show that, there is nowhere within the curriculum that discusses the practical aspects of mission to invigorate a burning desire for mission among seminary students. The two tables of contents do not mention anything close to biblical principles in mission. This analysis shows that the curriculum indeed need to be revisited and reviewed for it to be a living document in mission.

### Conclusion

The research was conducted, and analysis made based on the responses. The respondents provided data which have proved that there was need to look at the whole system of doing mission once more. The assumptions of the research were proved right but, there were a lot of things which were not known previously which the research has found out, Biblical principles in evangelism and mission are a new concept among the mission teams in the CCAP, Nkhoma Synod. The seminary curriculum content in mission is a dead in invigorating future church leaders to have a clear vision and passion for mission. It is indeed very important that the research was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **HISTORY OF MISSION AND THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA, PRESBYTERIAN, IN MALAWI**

#### 4.1 Brief Historical Background of Christianity in Malawi

The discussion will now focus on the selected important historical elements of the Malawian Church that have been deemed to be of relevance to this study. I cannot talk about Nkhoma Synod without aligning it to the actual beginnings of Christianity in Malawi of which Nkhoma Synod was not the first church to be founded in Malawi by the early missionaries. Therefore, a very brief overview of the actual beginning of Christianity in Malawi will be dealt with in this section by analyzing all the mission bodies which made an imprint in mission work among Malawians. Brown observes:

The understanding of one's origin and of one's history is absolutely essential to self-understanding today. To be unaware of how one got to the present state is to consign oneself to a perpetual state of amnesia. The transplanting of Christianity into what is today Malawi required self-sacrifice and great tenacity; the efforts of those responsible for this transplantation must be forever preserved and treasured.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Lawrence Brown, *The development in self-understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as church during the first forty years of autonomy: An ecclesiological study*, (D.Th dissertation). Cape Town, South Africa, Stellenbosch University, 2005, 21.

The genesis of Christianity in Malawi and the known traces of Christianity in Malawi were pioneered by a brave person by the name of Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary and explorer under the British government's sponsorship, who went on several expeditions from the coast into Africa's little-known interior. A scientific investigation of the geography and resources of the region, and opening up legitimate trade to replace the slave trade was in the interest of the British Government.<sup>67</sup> Due to his experiences during his first trip to Africa, Dr. Livingstone changed his mind as to what his focus should be. As he sailed along the Zambezi River, he included the following words in one of his letters home: "The end of the geographical feat is but the beginning of the missionary enterprise. May God grant me life to do some good to this poor Africa."<sup>68</sup> When he returned home on recess, he related his experiences in a book and addressed many meetings. Of special importance to the introduction of Christianity in Malawi is the appeal that he made at the Senate House of Cambridge University on 4 December 1857. His famous words were: "I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work I have begun? I leave it with you."<sup>69</sup> David Livingstone then felt he had reached the heart of the African continent. This is the reason why the church today is called, The Church of Central Africa, although

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<sup>67</sup> Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 1889 – 1962*. Cape Town, South Africa, Stellenbosch University, 1980, 11.

<sup>68</sup> Weller, J & Linden, J, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru, Zimbabwe, Mambo Press, 1984, 13-14.

<sup>69</sup> Weller J & Linden J, 13-14.

Malawi is in South East Africa. In 1874, Dr Livingstone died at Chitambo village in Zambia. In April 2009, the Church in Malawi celebrated 150 years of the arrival of Christianity, in memory of Dr. David Livingstone.

Livingstone's appeal steered a missionary passion in Great Britain that, in turn, initiated the formation of The Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). Bishop Charles Mackenzie, of the Church of England, led this group which was composed mostly of university students. They accompanied Livingstone on his return trip to Africa and, in 1861, established the first Christian mission station in Malawi. After a failed attempt, they withdrew to Zanzibar and, in 1888, resumed their work in Malawi at Likoma Island on Lake Malawi. From that time, they developed into what is known as the Anglican Council in Malawi that covers most parts of Malawi in four dioceses.

Meanwhile, the Free Church of Scotland made another response to Dr. David Livingstone's appeal. In 1875, under the leadership of Lieutenant Edward Young, the Free Church of Scotland started a mission centre at Cape Maclear, in Mangochi, at the southern tip of Lake Malawi. They named their centre Livingstonia Mission, a name given after Dr Livingstone, who had died in 1874. The original purpose in the formation of the Livingstonia Mission was that it should grow into a town, and afterwards a city, to become a great centre of commerce, civilization and Christianity. Later, they moved to the north and settled at Bandawe as their new headquarters, which eventually, in 1894, moved to the plateau west of Bandawe at a place known as Khondowe.

The establishment of the Blantyre Mission closely followed that of Livingstonia. Again, it was opened in response to Dr Livingstone's appeal. This mission was named



Blantyre, after Livingstone's birthplace in Scotland, and was established in October 1876 under the sponsorship of the Church of Scotland. The aim of the mission was stated as follows: "The mission is industrial and evangelical, designed to be a nucleus of advancing centuries of Christian life and civilization to the Nyasa (the then name of Malawi before independence) and the surrounding region."<sup>70</sup> The first team leader was Dr Macklin. He took charge of every missionary pioneering aspect and, only in 1878, the first clergyman, the Rev Duff Macdonald, was sent to take charge of affairs. At the outset, Blantyre Mission was not successful, until a new beginning was made in 1881 when the Rev David Clement Scott took over this mission. Among his outstanding achievements, Rev. Scott is remembered for his dedication in the training of African helpers as evangelists, who were to form the nucleus of a future Church. By the time he retired, he had laid a strong foundation for the African Church.<sup>71</sup> The re-founding of Blantyre Mission accelerated the growth of the enterprise of the Scottish Christians in Malawi. They introduced legal trade on a large enough scale to become a practical alternative to the slave trade. It soon became much too great a task for the missionaries, in addition to their other duties. Accordingly, the African Lakes Company was established.<sup>72</sup> Like their fellow Scottish Mission in Livingstonia, the Blantyre Mission's strategy was holistic. The mission intended to take care and develop both body and soul.

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<sup>70</sup> Steven Paas, *The Faith Moves South: A History of the church in Africa, Zomba, Malawi: Kachere Publications, 2006, 195.*

<sup>71</sup> Pauw, *Mission and church in Malawi*, 26.

<sup>72</sup> Weller and Linden, 45-46.

Unfortunately, there was more emphasis on the body than on the soul. When one side is emphasized at the expense of another, mission work is prone to face problems.

Next on the list of pioneers of the Gospel in Malawi is the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa. With Blantyre to the south and Livingstonia to the north, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) was established in the Central Region of Malawi in 1889.<sup>73</sup> Rev. Andrew Charles Murray and Rev T.C.B. Vlok jointly established the first mission station at Mvera. As regards the aim of their mission, the DRCM missionaries differed slightly from the Scottish, especially on civilization. A.C. Murray was quoted as having written the following in his diary: “We are not sent out, I think, to civilize peoples, but to convert them. Not to give them a high secular education, but to “teach them to keep all things” which our Lord and Master commanded. Let those who will be our helpers as evangelists, catechists or teachers, learn what is necessary for their work, but as far as the people in general are concerned, let us impress the Word of God upon them in all possible ways, and furthermore teach them to read the Bible for themselves in their own language.”<sup>74</sup> The headquarters was moved from Mvera to Nkhoma 23 years later. The missionary venture that started at Mvera has, over the years, grown into what is today known as the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). This Church is referred to as “a sample and testing field for the Malawian Church in this research” Right from the beginning, the two Scottish missions

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<sup>73</sup> Pauw, 65.

<sup>74</sup> Pauw, *Missions and church in Malawi*, 60.

showed interest in merging to form an indigenous African Presbyterian Church. Their discussions took a long time, but eventually, in 1924, they formed the CCAP. The DRCM, under the leadership of William Hoppe Murray, who was of Scottish descent, joined the CCAP in 1926. By that time, each of the three missions had grown into Presbyteries that developed into Synods in 1956. This is a road map to the development of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian in Malawi which brings together three missionary groups which started mission work in Malawi to form one denomination, “The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – CCAP.”

#### *4.1.1 Brief History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM)*

The third and last of the three denominations which comprise the CCAP in Malawi today, is the Church which came out of the missionary activities of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) from South Africa.<sup>75</sup> It is a historic event by looking back at the life and traditions of the Malawians who were living in the period of ignorance and without hope of salvation. Suffice to say that the missionary activities of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission gave birth to what we call today CCAP Nkhoma Synod through the labors of these missionaries by the grace of God. M.W. Ritief, in his book. “William Murray of Nyasaland,” writes: “The Church in its current state remains a miracle to the work of a Missionary God, the mission Dei.”<sup>76</sup> He stipulates good reasons

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>76</sup> M.W. Ritief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*; (Cape Town, Lovedale Press), 12.

for giving God all the glory and that it was not by human effort that the church was finally established by looking at various obstacles which could have made missionaries fail to do mission work in Malawi. He gives wonderful examples of the challenges missionaries faced such as impassable rivers and thick forests; wild animals such as lions; unfriendly and hostile people in the interior of Africa; lack of kinds of food they were used to eat in their homelands; malaria and other illnesses which claimed the lives of many missionaries on their way and during their stay in Malawi; communication barrier with the indigenous people just to mention but few.<sup>77</sup> But with the observation which Edward Parrinder has made about Africans, it is true that the society in Malawi was waiting for the appointed time to come to the realization of the true God. Parrinder says, “Africans are incurably religious.”<sup>78</sup> This was also the discovery of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission when they came to Malawi. They found people who had embraced gods in different societies wherever they went. Another writer by the name of John Mbiti writes, “The religious ideas and practices of the people arose from the quest to find answers to the phenomena of nature and to the ways in which they could make their lives safer and better.”<sup>79</sup> There was already fertile ground in Malawi for the penetration of the gospel of salvation. Hence the missionaries received warm reception although the people

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

<sup>78</sup> Edward Godfrey Parrinder, *African traditional Religion* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1962), 19.

<sup>79</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 14.

had a tough time understanding the language of the missionaries. Both parties lived in suspicion of each other for a time. It is good news that there is no missionary who was tortured or killed by the indigenous people in Malawi.

The history of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa dates back to the time when a group of the Dutch people made “The Great Trek” from Holland in search of a new settlement at the southern tip of the African continent. It was a journey that was led by Jan Van Riebek in 1652.<sup>80</sup> Hence these Dutch brought with them the Dutch Reformed Church denomination from Holland since most of them belonged to this church. It was the dominant denomination in Holland during that time. The Dutch Reformed Church was officially established at the Cape after obtaining the necessary rights from the church in Holland. However, all major decisions which were made at this church in South Africa had to be referred back to the main church in Holland.<sup>81</sup> It was a church which faced another big challenge in South Africa when the British colonized South Africa in 1806. These Dutch wanted autonomy from British rule and that brought them into conflict that affected the church as well. The control of this church by the mother church in Holland was phased out due to the limitations by the British Government that wanted to make sure that everything was known to them including matters of the church.<sup>82</sup> This freedom

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<sup>80</sup> Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 43.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 44.

from the mother church gave the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa an opportunity to reach out to other tribes around them and beyond, with the Gospel.

When Dr. David Livingstone came to Malawi, he found people being sold as slaves to Arab slave traders. He managed to free some slaves and took them to Lovedale in South Africa where they became Christians and received the right kind of training for their future mission activities among the missionaries.<sup>83</sup> These freed slaves later became interpreters for the missionaries who came to Malawi. God had already prepared a path for the evangelization of Malawi.

### *Conclusion*

The brief history has shown that Malawi was evangelized by different mission organizations. They came to Malawi almost at the same time. The time difference was very small. However, all of them started their mission work having different visions and means of doing mission work. The variations were a blessing in disguise because they complemented one another in the end.

## 4.2 Ways of Doing Mission by the Missionaries

In this section we are going to look at the ways missionaries used to spread the gospel in Malawi. These are the same ways which they used in spreading the gospel in

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<sup>83</sup> A.S. Labuschagne, *The Missionary* (Bloemfontein: Drufoma Press, 2002), 35.

different parts of the world. There would be some changes in the way they used the methods depending on the context of the people they encountered. But the principles and the goals remained the same, to bring people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, the Pioneer of missions in the New Testament (John. 3:16; Luke 19:10) saw his early mission as a three-fold task, the elements of which were complementary and supplementary.<sup>84</sup> Out of these tasks came different ministries on how to reach the people with the gospel. These were: Preaching, teaching and rendering other forms of relevant services aimed at various human needs such as giving medicines to the sick and food to the hungry (Lk. 4:18; Lk.4:23).<sup>85</sup> In the history of mission work, in one way or another this pattern has been followed by the church in its mission endeavors since the apostolic age (Acts 2:42; 3: 1-10; 5:17; 8:4). Though each ministry is related to the others, there is still a distinction that needs to be indicated. This shows that people are led to Christ Jesus through various ministries.

#### *4.2.1 Preaching*

Preaching was the first primary way of conveying the Christian faith to people who never heard the Gospel.<sup>86</sup> Central emphasis was laid upon the work of Christ as the Saviour of mankind. The church today continues the very same way of spreading the

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<sup>84</sup> A.S. Labuschagne, *The Missionary*, Bloemfontein, Druifoma Press, 2002, 35.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

gospel. The first missionaries could not directly address the people because of the communication barrier, hence they used interpreters.

The major method they used was to teach the word of God to some Malawians who understood English. These were, as already explained previously, freed slaves who were taken to South Africa at Lovedale.<sup>87</sup> It was a good preparation for communicating the gospel. In the case of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, the missionaries had to drill with these African brothers and send them out to the villages in the afternoon.<sup>88</sup> This shows that much of mission work in reaching out to the people personally was done by the black preachers. They were able to present the gospel according to the context of the local people in the villages. One thing is becoming increasingly clear, however helpful foreigners may be, in communicating to a given culture “the best communicators come from within the culture itself.”<sup>89</sup>

The Malawian preachers communicated the gospel by gathering people within the village and presenting the gospel. Those who had questions were given opportunities to ask. If the Malawian preachers did not have answers, they presented the questions to the white missionaries. An example of such questions was about polygamous marriages. The missionaries did not allow husbands who had more than one wife to be part of the church. Then one asked how he could disown his additional wives and children. Was it not

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<sup>87</sup> A.S. Labuschagne, *The Missionary*, Bloemfontein, Druifoma Press, 2002, page 35.

<sup>88</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, TEEM, Zomba, Malawi, 2013, 12.



inhuman? Such questions were addressed by the missionaries after many discussions during their sessions.

#### *4.2.2 Education*

Education was seen as one of the important means to facilitate the spreading of Good News of salvation.<sup>90</sup> By teaching people to read, it enabled them to know God and Christ by reading His word themselves. Schools were established both at the mission stations and the surrounding villages. The main emphasis was on the three areas of reading, writing and counting. It was embedded in the Mission and Vision statement of the Dutch Reformed Church that their mission was not to give higher education but to enable people to be able to read, write and count.<sup>91</sup> This mission statement deprived people in the central region of Malawi, which was predominantly evangelized by the Nkhoma Synod, of high-quality education. The other missions had good secondary schools for higher education. For the Dutch Reformed Church, it was enough for an African to know how to read and write. They thought pride sets in when one is highly educated. This in a sense shows the impure motive they had of not allowing equality among people who are all created in the image of God. Apartheid was also practiced in that African preachers were not allowed to wear shoes. They said shoes were a sign of

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Martin Pauw, *Missions and church in Malawi*, 60

pride to the Africans while a necessity for them. However, the gospel was preached by the fellow Malawians on a daily basis. The white missionaries preached during Sunday worship services through interpreters. Therefore, many people were reached with the gospel through this means.

Education was also important as one way of training and equipping individuals in different skills which were important for everyday use. Those who were clever in mastering the skills could be used to teach their fellow Malawians at later stages. The gospel made an impact in the societies very through quickly through education.

#### *4.2.3 Bible Translation and Distribution*

Translating the Bible into local languages was regarded as an important factor. The Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi put Bible translation as a priority so that people could hear God speaking to them in their own language. Bible translation was a challenging task in their day, it required people who had mastery of the local language as well as the original Bible languages.

Bible societies from an early date called for translation of the Bible into the daily language of the people.<sup>92</sup> Such translation have become an indispensable help and blessing for missionaries. In the case of the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi, some people were set aside to do the translation into the most commonly used language among

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<sup>92</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 14.

the people (Chichewa). The translation was done at Kaso Hill by W.H Murray and some Africans.<sup>93</sup> The work of Bible translation was done between 1903 and 1918 and the Chichewa Bible was made available to the Malawians in 1923. This led to the need for installing a printing press for church literature at Nkhoma.<sup>94</sup> This literature that was produced, apart from the Bible, was used for evangelism among the people. So reading and writing became a necessity among the people. It is not surprising to see many people who are capable of reading, writing and speaking good English among the villagers around mission stations. Therefore, the printing and distribution of Christian literature was regarded as important if Christianity was to be planted solidly in any given community.<sup>95</sup>

Through literature distribution, the church was able to present the true biblical teachings on which the church was built on. Production of tracts helped in summarizing the main teachings of the church and combat falsehood. Certain people were set aside to distribute literature in all the areas under the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi. This was a common trend among the early missions which started churches in Malawi. This was therefore a ministry on its own which helped people go know the truth and to be anchored in the truth.

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<sup>93</sup> Kamnkhwani, *The Historiography of Nkhoma Synod Dissertation*, Stellenbosch, Cape Town, 1998, 8.

<sup>94</sup> Martin Pauw, *Missions and Church in Malawi*, 62.

<sup>95</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 14.

#### 4.2.4 *Diaconia (service)*

Mission work does not only address the spiritual and political needs of a person. Missionaries used a holistic approach in evangelizing the new lands.<sup>96</sup> This method was also adopted by missionaries who started the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi. The spiritual needs of the people were met through the Word presented to the people in various ways on during different occasions. For this reason, missionaries rendered services aimed at the various human needs.

The various services provided by missionaries were aimed at evangelizing the people. One of such services was the healing service. To address the issue of healing the people, missionaries knew that there was a need for establishment of hospitals.<sup>97</sup> Those who were sick physically had to be attended to by giving them medicines. It was medication that was not accompanied with superstition as the case was with African medicine. The medical services were available to all people. Before getting medical treatment, those who were sick had to attend a service of worship, confirming to them that Jesus Christ is the healer and Savior of the souls.<sup>98</sup> It was an opportunity of preaching the gospel to those who did not attend the church services. The Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi built a magnificent hospital at Nkhoma, the current

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<sup>96</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 14.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>98</sup> Kamnkhwani, 4.

headquarters of the denomination. It is still providing excellent services not only to the people around Nkhoma, but the entire Malawi as a nation and the neighboring country of Mozambique. It is the first hospital in Malawi which specialized in eye operations.

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod has kept the tradition which the missionaries established of preaching the word of God to people of all walks of life and faiths. Some patients are pagans, Muslims and people from different denominations. There are chaplains who visit patients, share the gospel and pray with them. Most people have become Christians because of such encounters with the Savior Jesus through His word at the hospital. Therefore, people who came to mission hospitals for treatment were also taught about God and His Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>99</sup>

The missionaries opened artisan centers where people were exposed to different skills for the development of their lives.<sup>100</sup> The following areas were emphasized: - carpentry and brick molding, agriculture (animal and crop husbandry), cookery and sewing. All these services were operated as ways of reaching the people with the good news of the love of God to the people, through His Son, Jesus Christ. In agriculture, people became self-sufficient in food.<sup>101</sup> This was a good approach to evangelizing the

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<sup>99</sup> Kamnkhwani, *The Historiography of Nkhoma Synod Dissertation*, Stellenbosch, Cape Town, 1998, 8.

<sup>100</sup> Board for theological Studies Handbook, 11.

<sup>101</sup> Kamnkhwani, 5.

communities because there was a clear demonstration of the love of God through these services, which were given without any segregation.

The other service that was supplied to the villages around mission stations was clean and safe drinking water. There are up to now good water sources from which the villages around benefited in having clean water and avoiding waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea. So people enjoyed piped water from the missionary centers. This preached about God who provides the needs of the people.

#### *4.2.5 Koinonia*

Koinonia is a Greek word which means fellowship. Fellowship was one means used in introducing people to Christ. Jesus' incarnation among us was Koinonia. He came to dwell among us. He participated with the people in their worrying, their disappointments, their joys and their suffering. This caused people to see his glory (Jn.1: 14; 14:9) and to accept him.<sup>102</sup> Missionaries saw Koinonia as one of the means par excellence of introducing people to Christ. Therefore, today's churches must stimulate new ways of creating fellowship as a means of winning people to Christ. Those who are won are gathered into a fellowshiping community which the Bible calls ecclesia (church). This is important because no one can survive and thrive on Christian faith all by himself.<sup>103</sup> People need each other as together they journey together the road to the

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<sup>102</sup> Board for theological Studies Handbook, 12.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

kingdom. For this reason, Koinonia is indispensable and ought to be encouraged at all costs.

#### *4.2.6 Radio Communication*

Radio as a means of communicating the gospel has become increasingly valuable in modern times. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod is one of the first denominations to open and air gospel messages through the radio. The Station was called Modern Evangelistic Methods in Malawi (MEMA). The programs were recorded and sent to Ethiopia and people were able to listen to the gospel. The missionaries were fully convinced that through the radio, millions of people were reached with the gospel of salvation, at once.

#### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this section has discussed a number of ways in which God helped the missionaries to reach out to the heathens in Malawi with the gospel of Jesus Christ for their salvation. Missionaries used the above-mentioned ways in evangelizing the communities. They were ways which were relevant according to the contexts of the people and the period in history. Some of the ways are still valid and useful nowadays while others have either phased out completely or have been transformed to suit the modern context of the people in the communities with the same intention of winning them to the gospel of salvation. It is the intention of this paper that the church should still

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be experiencing numerical growth as well as spiritual development in our days much more than it used to experience in the past. It is the hope of all of us that the church should experience tremendous growth knowing that the challenges the missionaries faced are beyond our thinking. Language is not our problem currently in communicating the gospel. The church needs to refocus and reposition itself on how best to communicate the gospel so that many souls are saved from the coming judgment.

### 4.3 Establishment of Churches among the Indigenous Malawians

In this section, we are going to look at the actual inception of mission work which the Dutch Reformed Church did to establish the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. This reflects the extent to which mission work grew and expanded to different areas in Malawi, especially in its jurisdiction within the central region of Malawi within a given framework of time.

#### *4.3.1 Commencement of Mission Work*

The actual commencement of mission work by the Dutch Reformed Church started when Andrew Murray arrived in Malawi in 1888. First, he had the privilege of visiting the mission established by the Established Church of Scotland in Blantyre in southern Malawi. He was relieved to see that work had already been started in the area. He received a warm welcome and much kindness from Rev. and Mrs. Scott at their mission house. But Murray left the mission station with a negative feeling about Rev. Scott's work. Scott could not come up with numbers of converts or church members over



the period that mission work operated in the area. History says the Blantyre Mission had no converts for six years. Scott told Murray that his first aim was to civilize the natives in a Christian way by exercising influence on marriage, social, moral and political life.<sup>104</sup> By this time, Scott was building a church whose main purpose was to civilize the people by cultivating the concept of beauty in the minds of the people.<sup>105</sup> Murray differed a lot with Scott on seeking to elevate the people in a general sense rather than winning them as members of Christ's church. Murray wrote:

We are not sent out, I think, to civilize peoples, but to convert them. Not to give a high secular education, but to teach them to keep all things which our Lord and master has commanded. Let those who will be our helpers as evangelists, catechist teachers, learn what is necessary for their work, but as far as people in general are concerned, let us impress the Word of God upon them in all possible ways, and furthermore teach them to read the Bible for themselves in their own language.<sup>106</sup>

A few days later, Murray visited the first mission station in Malawi which was started by the Livingstonia Mission, at Cape Maclear. He had a sobering experience when he stood at the small desolate graveyard observing the bronze plaque behind Dr. Black's last resting place. On the plaque were written the words, "Faithful unto the end." Murray gave his remarks saying, "How soon..... would not also our graves be dug in Nyasaland.... If we can do no other, let us at least then be faithful, Lord help us to that

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<sup>104</sup> Likhoozi, Matalius, *Training of Leaders as a Great Boon to Solid Church Growth*, Thesis, Puritan Reformed theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, 2011, 29.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 60.

end through Thy grace.”<sup>107</sup> Murray was mindful of the fact that life in the mission field was very unpredictable. During his mission work in Malawi, Murray nearly died twice, but the Lord spared him for the furtherance of His Kingdom. He was once attacked by a leopard and lost much blood but came back to good health.<sup>108</sup>

Murray went to the mission with youthful enthusiasm. He proceeded to Bandawe where he was received by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Laws of Livingstonia Mission. He spent two weeks making acquaintances with the climate and cultural conditions in Malawi before embarking on mission work as an independent missionary.<sup>109</sup> In his survey, he went north of Livingstonia and was fully convinced of starting mission work there, crossing the borders to Tanzania. Martin Pauw explains that Dr. Laws and Murray were anxious to evangelize the area north of Bandawe.<sup>110</sup> Within the two weeks of his stay at Bandawe, Murray was able to scout the far north area, looking for a place where he could establish his mission station. The native people impressed him by showing much hospitality. He stayed at a village of Kararamuka for a month.<sup>111</sup> This journey ended on a sad note when Murray suffered severe sunstroke to the point of death. He was taken back to Bandawe in critical condition, but he recovered mysteriously from the illness.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>108</sup> Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 32.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Pauw, 61.

<sup>111</sup> Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 30.

<sup>112</sup> Pauw, 61.

Since north of Bandawe was extremely hot, Laws asked Murray to look for another area south of Bandawe. He therefore went to Njuyu where Rev. and Mrs. Elmslie, Free Church of Scotland missionaries, were staying. Since the weather was cool at Njuyu, Murray became strong again for mission work. Robert Laws felt that the southern part of Bandawe and Njuyu should be cooler than the north which was a very good assumption. In fact, there was at first a suggestion that Murray should return to South Africa, but he refused. So, he agreed to hunt for another area in the central region of Malawi in the area of Mwase and Chiwere. This plan worked perfectly well for Murray. The weather was favorable for Murray, and he was fully convinced that the Lord had sent him to do mission work in the central region of Malawi. The Livingstonia Mission had no objections to the final decision of Murray.<sup>113</sup>

Since Murray was going to live very far away from the Livingstonia Mission, Dr. Laws asked the Foreign Missions in South Africa to send another missionary to accompany Andrew Charles Murray into central Malawi. The response was positive, and Murray waited a couple of months for the other missionary to arrive. This time was providential as Murray was able to use this time to observe the strengths and weaknesses of the Livingstonia Mission. He was impressed with the spiritual nature of the mission.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 31.

<sup>114</sup> Pauw, 62.

The emphasis of Dr. Robert Laws was to bring people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Murray was encouraged to see the work bearing fruits. He had the opportunity to experience a wind of revival throughout the Livingstonia Mission area. People gathered in large numbers to hear the gospel, and many came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior during this time.

Murray was deeply impressed with the Children's Ministry. Robert Laws and his fellow missionaries put much emphasis on training children. They started schools where they taught, not only reading and writing, but the word of God. Martin Pauw says, "Murray recorded in his book that the hope of mission work of the future church depended on the lives of the children."<sup>115</sup> Both of these impressions, on the spiritual nature of the work of the Livingstonia Mission, and the Children's Ministry, reflected what the Dutch Reformed Church would also regard as priorities. Martin Pauw writes, "The spiritual emphasis would aim at drawing people to conversion to Christ and concentrating on station and village schools would draw as many young people, even older people, as possible to be reached by the teacher-evangelists."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 63

#### *4.3.2 Rev. Theunis C. Botha Vlok Joins Murray*

Rev. Vlok from South Africa was one of the students at the Wellington Missionary Training Institute who had shown interest in mission work. He completed his training in March 1889. According to Pauw, Vlok heard Andrew Murray speaking in 1888 before the latter left for Malawi. This experience was decisive for the future of Vlok. He became convinced that the Lord was calling him for mission work and to join Murray in the mission field in Malawi. In 1889, on March 7<sup>th</sup>, at the age of twenty-three, Vlok departed for Malawi as the second missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. After spending two months traveling to Malawi, Vlok found Rev. Andrew Charles Murray waiting for him at Bandawe in the north of Malawi, ready to search for a suitable mission site.<sup>117</sup> This was a joyful moment for Murray who had been patiently waiting for his partner in missions to come join and start mission work together.

#### *4.3.3. Murray and Vlok Journey South of Bandawe*

Murray and Vlok had the approval of Robert Laws to go south of Bandawe in search of a good site for establishing the Mission Station for the Dutch Reformed Church. They left Bandawe on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1889.<sup>118</sup> Two weeks later they arrived in the area of Chief Mwase in Kasungu. Laws had recommended this place for consideration. Murray and Vlok were not deeply impressed with the environment at Chilanga, Chief Mwase's

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<sup>117</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 63

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 63

area.<sup>119</sup> They went further south of the area to the Chewa Chief Chiwere. The missionaries received a hearty welcome and spent some days at the village. The chief was very glad to hear their reason for coming. He demanded that a site should be chosen for them to establish their mission station not far from the village.<sup>120</sup> This was the actual beginning of mission work by Murray and Vlok in this area of Chief Chiwere. They did not waste time but got organized on how to start evangelizing the people they found in this area. The missionaries felt that the ground was fertile for the gospel because of the warm welcome they were accorded by the Chief and all the people in the village.

With great enthusiasm, Murray preached the first sermon in Chichewa, the native language of the people in that area, on the first Sunday. The Chief summoned all the people in the village to attend the worship service the following Sunday since he was already impressed with the teaching. Murray preached to over two hundred people on the second Sunday.<sup>121</sup> Pauw explains that the people of Chiwere had great interest in the gospel, evident from their reaction. Murray and Vlok believed that the site for mission work was approved by God.<sup>122</sup>

Since Murray and Vlok were on a scouting tour, they returned to Bandawe by September with great memories of a successful mission trip. They brought with them two

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 64

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 64

<sup>121</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 64

<sup>122</sup> Ibid

boys from Chiwere to be trained at Bandawe so they could be of great use to the missionaries when they finally started their work. This gesture impressed the hearts of the people that their own boys could be trained by the missionaries and be part of the new teaching which they waited for with great expectation. Training was an integral part of the mission field. The two boys were taught the English language, the people's culture and the Bible. These two boys were indeed assets for the missionaries in spreading the gospel.<sup>123</sup>

On their way back to Bandawe, they used a different route. They wanted to make acquaintances with chiefs who lived in the lake shore area. It is very interesting that most of these chiefs offered their areas for mission. Chief Ndindi offered to act as a forwarding agent for missionaries' goods delivered by ship.<sup>124</sup>

#### *4.3.4 Beginning of Mission Work at Mvera – Chiwere's Area*

After further discussions and considerations with Robert Laws at Bandawe, the decision was finally reached to settle in Chiwere's area. Murray and Vlok made all the necessary preparations to move. Dr. Laws gave them eleven young men to assist them in the work. These men had good knowledge of the language and the cultural practices of the people in the Chiwere area. An arrangement was made with the Universities Mission

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<sup>123</sup> Likhoozi, Matalius, *Training of Leaders as a Great Boon to Solid Church Growth*, Thesis, Puritan Reformed theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, 2011, 33.

<sup>124</sup> Labuschagne, *The missionary*, 61.

to Central Africa to use their boat (See picture 1 at the back).<sup>125</sup> This arrangement gave them an opportunity to visit Likoma Island on Lake Malawi which was the mission station for the Anglican Church of the Universities Mission to Central Africa. The ship docked at Ndindi on Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. For three days, the group carrying all the essentials of the missionaries from Bandawe, walked slowly towards Chiwere. They reached Chiwere on Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1889, and pitched their tent near the Msundudzi River.<sup>126</sup> November 28<sup>th</sup> is marked as the foundation day for the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi, celebrated every year by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Chief Chiwere welcomed them warmly. The first few days were spent scouting for the best site for permanent mission buildings. Chiwere accepted the suggestion of the missionaries to build the mission station on a broad ridge about two miles to the north of the village.

#### *4.3.5 Infrastructure Development at the Mission Site*

Without delay, Murray and Vlok set out erecting two small houses for accommodation before the rains started. Normally, rains were expected in late October or early November. This year the rains delayed much to the disappointment of the people. Because the missionaries were building the houses from mud, they were accused of stopping the rains in order to continue with their work of building the houses. Murray and

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<sup>125</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 65.

<sup>126</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 65.



Vlok denied these allegations before Chief Chiwere but promised to pray for the rain although they could not guarantee the outcome. The Chief decided to stone the missionaries to death if rain could not come that week. The work of building the houses progressed well because there were many helping hands.

#### *4.3.6 Beginning of Evangelism Work*

The delay of the rains in 1889 was one of the situations God used to preach the gospel to the native Malawians. Chief Chiwere, who was prepared to stone the missionaries by the end of that week, was astonished when God showered them with the blessing of good rain the following day after the missionaries stated that they would pray that God of heaven would remember his people with water from above. Martin Pauw states that rain poured heavily. He further says, “The villagers and Chief Chiwere believed that Murray and Vlok saved the true, living and powerful God due to the rain which they promised to pray for.”<sup>127</sup> God used this as one of the many ways in which He spoke to the people even during the time that the missionaries were not fluent enough to speak the native language.<sup>128</sup> The coming of the missionaries coincided with the coming of the British colonial masters. The Chief was suspicious of the missionaries since he could not differentiate between the two groups as both were white people. The colonial masters came to take control of the land; Chiwere and the natives were very furious about

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<sup>127</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 66.

<sup>128</sup> Likhoozi, *Training of Leaders as a Great Boon to Solid Church Growth*, 34.

that. So that left the natives with many unanswered questions. But the coming of the rain changed the perspective of the Chief and his subjects; these whites had come to the area for a good cause.<sup>129</sup>

The missionaries wasted no time and began to preach the gospel and witness to the people at every opportunity. The Lord's Day began with a white flag flying from the tallest tree at the station. All the people prepared themselves to attend the service. Then the people were summoned to church with the sounding of a native trumpet. Murray's preaching emphasized that all humanity was the same; both the missionaries and the natives were created by God. All had the same blood. All had sinned and were in need of salvation.<sup>130</sup> In his evaluation of the people he discovered that there was little sense of societal or individual sins. Therefore, the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 were expounded by Murray and Vlok every Lord's Day in order to expose them. He usually preached the good news of forgiveness of sins and salvation for man in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Murray's first sermon at Mvera was from John 3:16.<sup>131</sup> It was a befitting sermon because some of Chiwere were slaves and were not shown love and kindness by the citizens and less so by the Chief. Old Chiwere was very cruel. An example which Retief gives is that when the chief's dogs were hungry, he

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<sup>129</sup> Likhoozi, 35.

<sup>130</sup> Pauw, 67.

<sup>131</sup> Likhoozi, *Training of Leaders as a Great Boon to Solid Church Growth*, 34.

would have an old slave killed to feed them. He was amused to see people suffering.<sup>132</sup> The old chief loved bloodshed. What a contrast to the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loves all people and does not want anyone to perish. The message of God's love towards the worthless and sinful people of the world would be very appealing to those in affliction and at the same time transforming to those who were at that time the oppressors of the week in the society.

#### *4.3.7 Means of Reaching & Building a Community of Faith*

Murray and Vlok quickly organized themselves on how the gospel would reach the people and build a community of faith within the given time they had for mission work. Preaching from the pulpit, they thought, was not enough to disciple those who had made a confession to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior. Hence the first category of people he had great interest in investing the gospel were the youths. He therefore emphasized on education of the youths in reading, writing and counting. The course was spiritually integrated. Much of the time was spent on the Scriptures. The first qualified teacher was Tomani from Cape Maclear. In 1890, he was invited to Mvera Mission to teach and help train others to become good teachers.<sup>133</sup> By using this method, people were added to the number of believers everyday. These youths required good

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<sup>132</sup> Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Pauw, 67.

discipleship to mature in their spiritual life and be useful tools to witness to other people the message of salvation. Therefore, there was sporadic and unprecedented transformation in the society. The change was very evident by looking at the character of the people who had accepted the gospel. The change was also contagious. Nobody wanted to keep the gospel to him/herself. This made the church grow quickly. The attendance from the first worship service was overwhelming. There were over two hundred people at every Sunday worship service at Mvera Mission station.<sup>134</sup> This was a good indication that the harvest was ready and that the laborers were few (Matt. 9:35-38).

The missionaries did not neglect the elderly people in the society. They were given the opportunity to read, write and arithmetic during their own free time in the afternoon. These people were also very receptive to the gospel so that there were a number of them who made faithful commitment to serve the Lord. They were discipled and became mature Christians.

Since the schools were within reach in their own villages, many elderly people were able to attend, and they developed zeal for the Lord and were in no time baptized. The church witnessed the first baptism of two men in 1891. They started their Christian walk with the missionaries at Bandawe.<sup>135</sup> It was a colorful occasion which drew the attention and ignited the desire of many indigenous Malawians to become Christians. However, the first original group of people from Chief Chiwere was baptized in 1897. A

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>135</sup> Kamnkhwani, 4.

total of thirteen people were baptized on one day.<sup>136</sup> This was a milestone in the growth of the church since these indigenous Christians had zeal for the spread of the gospel at all times. They devoted themselves to teaching and evangelizing their own people. It was indeed a time of contagious Christian living. They preached by word and deeds and many people were converted because of the change of the character of their fellow Malawians.

Another important step taken in the establishment of the church was the training of evangelists. These evangelists helped to bring the message of Christ to thousands of people and helped to organize congregations and prepare the people for confirmation and baptism by the missionary minister.<sup>137</sup> This was a great way of bringing many people to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Hence, Mvera congregation, the first congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church, quickly developed out posts, which later became independent congregations. The first was Kongwe, ten miles north-west of Mvera, which became the second congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church followed by Nkhoma, twenty-five miles south-west of Mvera.<sup>138</sup> Evangelists traveled long distances to spread the gospel and the faith was grounded in the lives of the people with the establishment of mission stations close to the people.

Training of church leaders was at the heart of the missionaries. They intentionally did this, realizing that the work would one day be fully in the hands of the indigenous people. The first training of teacher-evangelists emphasized teaching skills. Then, the

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Pauw, 67.

<sup>138</sup> Kamnkhwani, 5.

second step was to train people to be purely evangelists. It was in 1911 when training of evangelists started.<sup>139</sup> These evangelists were theologically trained to handle ecclesiastical matters and solely manage the affairs of the church. By this time schools had independent administration. A step further was taken to recruit indigenous Malawians to be trained as ministers of the Divine Word and Sacraments in 1923 at a meeting which took place at Nkhoma from 12-15 September 1923. Evangelists Andrea Nankumba and Namon Katengeza were considered for theological training. Kamnkhwani quotes:

This meeting discussed and realized that it is indeed necessary to allow some of the evangelists to continue training (theological studies) and ordain them so that they become ministers. As a result, after the meeting had prayed and carefully consulted each other, they selected two: Andrea Nankumba and Namon Katengeza.<sup>140</sup>

This was a process leading them to ordination to the holy ministry as the first two Malawians to become ministers. So the missionaries made a deliberate move to train Malawians in different categories in order for the church to have a very solid ground to withstand any tests in the future. Through these means, the church had grown tremendously numerically and geographically because of the efforts and strategies of training different groups of people in the church for them to help in evangelism. Shortly afterwards the mission received more workers from South Africa including Rev. William

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<sup>139</sup> Kamnkhwani, 6.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

Hoppe Murray who was in the country from 1894 to 1937. W.H. Murray took over as head of the Mission when A.C. Murray returned to South Africa in 1901. When he took over he said: “We must expand as fast as we can by means of outposts, schools and mission stations or others will supplant us.”<sup>141</sup> The work expanded considerably and several missions were opened. By 1903 there were stations at Mvera, Kongwe, Livulezi and Nkhoma. In 1904 a normal school was opened at Mvera for the training of teachers. By 1914 there were 2000 African helpers preaching to 60, 000 people in 2000 villages. J.L. Pretorius wrote that the D.R.C.M. made its greatest contribution at the village level. Its aim has always been to establish a local church that would be self-governing and self-sustaining.<sup>142</sup> When the CCAP Nkhoma Synod was celebrating one hundred years of existence in 1989, the church had over 180,000 communicant church members, excluding catechumen and Sunday school members.<sup>143</sup> By the year 2010, the church had already grown to over one million members.<sup>144</sup> This number still excludes catechumen and Sunday school members.

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<sup>141</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Kamnkhwani, 6.

<sup>144</sup> Likhoozi, 83.

### *Conclusion*

The church experienced unprecedented growth right from the beginning of mission work. The missionary efforts in training indigenous evangelists and teachers helped in reaching the people with the gospel very quickly and easily. There was good coordination between the missionaries and the indigenous people for the work to be done with much ease. The Malawians were empowered in decision- making at an early stage of ministry. Missionaries learnt a lot from the Malawian Christians about their culture and how the church could be organized to suit the context of the people. One of the examples is that of liquor. Missionaries found Malawians drinking beer. Beer was not prohibited in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, but the Malawians declared early that beer be prohibited in the church because people drink to get drunk which is against the Bible. The policy was therefore binding among the Malawian Christians from then till now. Such policies helped the church do its activities according to the context of the people. The people easily identify themselves to something they already know takes place within their societies and cultures. The Malawians embraced the religion so quickly because of such practices.

### *The Autonomy of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Malawi*

The Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi started mission work in Malawi with a clear focus of the future church. As indicated above, the mission wanted to establish from the start, a church that would be self-governing, self-sustaining and self-



propagating.<sup>145</sup> This was something which they promoted as their vision and mission statement. This mindset propelled them to train church leaders with all seriousness so that when time would come for them to leave this church, it would still stand and grow.<sup>146</sup> The CCAP Nkhoma Synod, like her sister CCAP denominations, attained autonomy in 1962. At this time every responsibility was left in the hands of the indigenous Malawians although the white missionaries still continued partnering with the indigenous Christian leaders of the church. The church teaching on self-reliance through giving was received with resistance at first because members of other denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, were not required to give to the Lord in their churches. The Catholics had their financial support from Rome for a long time.<sup>147</sup>

Kamukhuni writes that the development of the church in Malawi took three main phases.

#### *4.4.1 The Pioneering Missionary Period (1889-1903)*

During the church's initial phase, the missionaries had a lot of work consolidating and bringing an embryo church to infancy. It was a time when the number of workers was increasing in the mission field. They were people of different skills such as:- doctors and nurses; agriculture experts; professional teachers, home economics and other much

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<sup>145</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 13.

<sup>146</sup> Likhoozi, 102.

<sup>147</sup> Brown, *The Development in self Understanding*, 55.

needed skills in the mission field. There were also a lot of indigenous Malawians who were actively involved in mission work during this particular stage. This time saw the birth of Mvera, Kongwe and Livulezi mission stations. Some early believers received baptism during this phase; hence, it was the birth of the church with these committed Christians.<sup>148</sup>

#### *4.4.2 The Missionary establishment Period (1903-1925)*

This was a very decisive moment for the future church. The missionaries involved the indigenous church leaders in decision-making in the church.<sup>149</sup> This was a good gesture of testing the ability of the Malawians who were to be entrusted with leadership of the church in the near future. It was during this same period that emphasis was placed on training Malawians as teachers, evangelists and pastors. Among many achievements during this period, the Bible was translated into the Malawian language so that Christians had the Bible in Chichewa. It was the Bible that all churches use up to now in Malawi. The Malawians were organized into various committees to learn how to run the church and participate fully in all the activities. They were not to be onlookers but the decision-makers and managers of the church.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Kamnkhwani, 3.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 4.

#### *4.4.3 The United Missionary Effort (1925-1959)*

There was intensity in the use of Malawians in key positions. Rev. Andrea Nankumba was the first African to be elected by Nkhoma Presbytery to the CCAP standing committee in 1925. In 1934, Rev. Namon Katengeza was the first African Moderator of the Nkhoma Presbytery which later became Nkhoma Synod. And Rev. Ashan Malenga was elected the Deputy Clerk of the Presbytery. These were senior positions which had been run by the white missionaries. This was a good way of shaping indigenous leadership for the future of the new church. This trend continued culminating in the final handover of the church to the Malawian leadership in 1962.<sup>151</sup>

#### *Conclusion*

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod became an autonomous church in 1962. There was a smooth transition in leadership and management of the church. For a number of years Malawians acted as observers when the missionaries took a leading role in managing mission work. There was a time when Malawians worked side by side with the missionaries to receive on-the-job training as they observed and worked at the same time. The contributions of the Malawians impressed the missionaries who were confident that the church would continue without the involvement of the white people. It was a church

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<sup>151</sup> Kamnkhwani, 4.

that motivated its Christians to be evangelistic in order to expand. It was also self-reliant, not depending on donations to carry out its activities. Furthermore, church leaders were well trained especially in the word of God.

#### 4.5 Practical Involvement of the New Church in Mission

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod had seen how the mother church, The Dutch Reformed Church, was doing mission work. Since much of the work was done by the indigenous Malawians, it was easy for the church to continue with zeal to reach out to other people with the gospel.

The first assignment which the church had was to continue with the establishment of churches in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe were three countries which the British government brought into a federation. It was called the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This was also called Central African Federation (CAF).<sup>152</sup> This was declared on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1953, by the British colonial masters. The two countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe had copper and gold mines, respectively. Many Malawian men went to work there. So, Malawi was a supplier of a labor force for the two countries. Most men who went to work in the mines never returned to Malawi. Some of them married Zambian and Zimbabwean women.

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<sup>152</sup> [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com) > federation of...

#### 4.5.1 Mission Work in Zambia

The introduction of the gospel in Eastern Province of Zambia, which culminated in the establishment of the present-day Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) dates back to 1899. In that year, while on leave, one of the native evangelists of the Kongwe mission station in Malawi asked for permission to visit Chief Mpezeni's country. The evangelist brought good news that the chief had agreed that the missionaries could visit his country.<sup>153</sup> In June 1899, approximately 200 people, mostly Africans, from the Mvera congregation, Malawi, and two missionaries, left Kongwe and made a camp at the source of Bua River on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1899. They named this place Magwero – meaning, “the origin.” The Dutch Reformed Church of the Orange Free State in Zambia recorded this date and placed it as the beginning and establishment of the Reformed Church in Zambia.<sup>154</sup>

As already reflected above, although the work in Zambia began before the autonomy of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, much of the work of evangelism and mission was done by Malawians. Therefore, when the CCAP Nkhoma Synod became autonomous, the friendly ties which existed continued. As the Nkhoma Synod had the first indigenous Malawian church ministers in 1925, RCZ had Justo Mwale from the Magwero, Madzimoyo congregation as the first Zambian church minister in 1929. The

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<sup>153</sup> Dr. Lukas Soko, *Pentecostalism and schism in the Reformed Church in Zambia*, theol. Vol.31 n.2 Bloemfontein Jan.2011, Journal article.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

church in Zambia attributes her origin to Nkhoma Synod due to the different roles Nkhoma Synod played towards the growth of the church in Zambia.

#### *4.5.2 Mission Work in Zimbabwe*

Since 1903, thousands of Malawians migrated to Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in search of better employment opportunities. The CCAP Harare Synod came into being as a result of migrant workers from both Malawi and Zambia who worked in mines, industries and farms.<sup>155</sup>

The spiritual needs of the migrants were highlighted when, in 1905; a delegation of workers went all the way to Mvera in Malawi, covering a distance of about 600 km on foot to request the services of a missionary.<sup>156</sup> Mvera, as already mentioned, was the first mission station of the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi. All mission organizations in Malawi at this particular point in time, when the request came, were under a federation. Different mission organizations in Malawi took note of the request, but no missionary could be recruited. In 1911, Rev. T.C.B Vlok, a well experienced missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, after staying in Malawi for twenty-three years, volunteered to go to work among the migrants.<sup>157</sup> He worked as a representative of the Federated Missions in

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<sup>155</sup> Pauw, *Mission and Church*, 140.

<sup>156</sup> [www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za](http://www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za).

<sup>157</sup> Pauw, 141.

Malawi. There was an agreement that he would work among the Chichewa-speaking people in Mashonaland. There were already 33,000 Malawians in Zimbabwe by 1914.

Vlok was greatly assisted by evangelists from Malawi in his mission work. He was replaced by Rev. J. Jackson in 1936 and in 1953 Rev. M.S. Daneel took over. Over the years, several missionaries from the Nkhoma Synod in Malawi joined in mission work especially after the church was fully handed over for indigenous leadership. Some of the notable ordained ministers from Nkhoma Synod who were missionaries in the church in Zimbabwe at different times were as follows:

1. Rev. A.M. Kuchona
2. Rev. J. Mlozi
3. Rev. J.N Maseko
4. Rev. T. Chipeta
5. Rev. L.T Tsitsi
6. Rev. J.N Chimutu
7. Rev. J.E. Kalema
8. Rev. D.S. Mwakanandi
9. Rev. P.A Kachaje
10. Rev. J.G Juma
11. Rev. Mawanga
12. Rev. T.Y. Mathyoka.<sup>158</sup>

The first official congregation was established in Salisbury in 1945 with Gwelo in 1950, Buluwayo in 1955 and several others followed. These first congregations fell under Nkhoma presbytery of the Nkhoma Synod.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> [www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za](http://www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za).

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

#### *4.5.3 Mission Work in Mozambique*

Mission work continued in another neighboring country, Mozambique. The Reformed Church in Mozambique (Igreja Reformada em Mozambique) in Portuguese was founded by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. They started Mphatso Mission in 1905 upon requests from Christians who lived within the borders of Malawi and Mozambique and participated in worship at Mlanda Mission in Malawi. By 1919, five missions were opened in Tete Province. The Portuguese government influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, closed the missions in 1922 and forced the missionaries to leave.<sup>160</sup>

Between 1922 and 1971, the church members had to meet secretly under trees and crossing the border to attend worship services in Malawi. In 1972, the first black missionary, called Rev. Pedro Tempe, started mission in South Mozambique, in Gaza Province. Twenty years of painful rebuilding followed. Rev. Pieter Botha and Rev. Kobus Minnaar played an important role in this. Both were former missionaries in Malawi under the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1975, the Igreja Reformada em Mozambique was officially registered by the government.

Although the country gained independence from the Portuguese in 1975, there has been continued political war for decades in the country.<sup>161</sup> Most people run for their life to Malawi as, asylum seekers. By 1988, there were a lot of refugee camps in Malawi for

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<sup>160</sup> [www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za](http://www.rff.theoutreachfoundation.co.za).

<sup>161</sup> [www.blackpast.org](http://www.blackpast.org).



people from Mozambique. The church had a great opportunity to reach them with the gospel. When they were repatriated back to Mozambique, the church made follow-ups to the members. This was enhanced by sending evangelists to continue ministering the gospel to them. Mozambique which was predominantly Catholic was closed to any religious influence other than the catholic faith. But most people did not like the denomination since religious leaders perpetrated a lot of evil things and inflicted pain on the citizens; the people saw no justification in a religion that demonstrated violence and cruel acts to the citizens. Since they saw how the church was operating in Malawi, they loved that this Presbyterian Church could do mission work there. Although threats were there, some Malawian missionaries went there secretly and established churches. There are two Synods in Mozambique as a result of the mission work by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. These Synods are Mphatso and Thumbine, which owe their existence to the bravery of some Nkhoma Synod missionaries. Rev. L.R. Matanda did wonderful mission work to the southeast of Malawi in Milanje, Mozambique. It was under his efforts that we now have Thumbine Synod. He went at a time when roads were very dangerous to use because of landmines planted to fight against enemies during wars in Mozambique. He was brave enough to sacrifice his life for the sake of the gospel.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Personal interviews with Rev. Matanda.

### *Conclusion*

This section has shown relentless efforts and involvement of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod during and after the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries gave full leadership and management of the church to the indigenous Malawians. The church kept on expanding because of the great potential the church had in evangelism and mission. One can tell that evangelism and mission were in the bloodstream of the church. It was known for its vigor for evangelism and mission.

This whole section portrays a good picture of the mother church, the Dutch Reformed Church, as a tool which God used to reach out to many people relentlessly. They were involved in mission in many different places within that time period. They were in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe doing mission work as early as 1905. This was not a mean achievement looking at the challenges they faced when doing the work. With this good gesture, the baby church started well by emulating the wonderful example of the mother church. Therefore, there is a need to refocus and discover where the church has gone wrong. For sure, since we are living in a changing world, revisiting the strategies more especially the biblical principles, is a great idea to do the work as the Lord wants.

### 4.6 Results of Church's Involvement

The fruits of the labors of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in the mission fields in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique cannot be overemphasized. The first visible fruit is

the establishment of congregations in the three mission fields. Congregations were established because of the people who had been converted to the faith in Jesus Christ. Time fails me to provide the actual statistics for each mission field.

The second proof of the observable fruits of the mission work by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod is the autonomy of the churches in the mentioned areas which later became independent Synods. Currently we have the Zambia Synod, the Harare Synod, the Mphatso and the Thumbine Synods because of the numerical growth which happened in these countries due to fruitful work of evangelism and missions by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod.

#### 4.7 Church Expansion Period

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod rejoices in what the Lord did through the efforts of the church in mission work. The history of the beginning of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod showed tremendous growth from the inception of mission work by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi (DRCM). When looking at the increasing numbers of Christians from the start of mission work to the present, it is evident that church growth happened due to evangelism, before and after the missionaries left.<sup>163</sup> The establishment of the Namoni Katengeza Church Lay Training Center helped in increased evangelism and mission by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod to enhance numerical growth. Martin Pauw also writes:

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<sup>163</sup> *Mission and Church in Malawi*, 284.

When looking at the statistics of the Presbytery/Synod of Nkhoma, the claim that this field has been one of the most fruitful fields of the DRC, appears quite justified. After the initial high growth of 21.5% per annum, recorded for the years 1903-1917, followed by the slump of the war and post-war years, 1917-1923, the growth rate had stabilized to some extent. Although there were fluctuations from year to year, the average growth over many years was 5.2% for communicant members.<sup>164</sup>

It was estimated that by the year 2000, the membership of CCAP Nkhoma Synod would reach 400,000.<sup>165</sup> However, Brown, in his research found out that the membership of the church had gone beyond the estimates calculated by Martin Pauw. At the 2000 General Synod meeting, Nkhoma Synod reported the following statistics: 110 congregations, 13 presbyteries and 600,000 members.<sup>166</sup> This increase shows that over the years prior to the year 2000, much conversion was experienced in the Nkhoma Synod. Much of this conversion was achieved through intensive evangelism and mission work in both home and foreign mission. Likhoozi records that the second reason for the growth was due to proper training of church leaders in evangelism and missions. It is clearly reflected that the years before 2000 were years of great revival in the church.<sup>167</sup> Many people who went for mission work received training at Namoni Katengeza Church Lay Training Center in Dedza. One would conclude that they were well prepared for the task ahead of them in addition to the fact that these years were years of revival, and the harvest was ready.

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<sup>164</sup> Pauw, 284.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Brown, *The Development in Self Understanding*, 114.

<sup>167</sup> Likhoozi, 101.

#### 4.8 Period of Recess in Evangelism and Mission

The church experienced a big recess in missions in the years 1917-1923.<sup>168</sup> The reason was the outbreak of World War 1, which affected Malawi as a nation since many men were recruited as soldiers to fight the British enemies away from their home country.<sup>169</sup> This was a hindrance to mission work. The next experience is the period after the year 2000. There might be a number of reasons which affected church growth during this particular period. During this period one characteristic feature is dwindling evangelism activities. It was a period when people continued doing mission work but without the real unction of the Spirit. In other words, this was a period beyond the revival era which God had brought to Malawi.

There was laxity in equipping the laity. Economic factors played a great role in questioning the validity for sending the laity to the lay training center while there was a well-trained minister at the congregation. Many ministers advocated for, “Every congregation must be a Lay Training Center.” This killed the activities spirit of lay training. This was a big shock and disappointment to many members of the church who missed the opportunity to receive the much-needed training in their various roles in the church. The lay training center was rendered useless. Zeal for mission declined as there was no opportunity for training in that.

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<sup>168</sup> Pauw, 284.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

This whole section has outlined the positive impact the church had made in the Malawian societies and beyond because of the gospel. It is worth noting that there were periods of tremendous church growth and also times of difficulties and low yield due to factors expressed above and others not known. Since mission work is of God, there was a need for the church to listen again to the direction on how, where and when to go out for evangelistic activities.

There was tremendous outcry for the word of God in specific periods which should be taken seriously as times when God brought revival among the people. The people saw their need for the gospel and were able to travel hundreds of miles seeking missionaries to minister to them. There is Christianity in Zimbabwe today because of such hearts which God prepared for the revival to take place. The people were receptive to the gospel message.

Suffice it to say, God led his church as he wanted and produced good fruit by reaching out to those who needed the gospel. Receptivity to the gospel happens with God's interventions. Mission work is not man's effort, but God at work using human beings as agents.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BIBLICAL VIEWS ON MISSION, EVANGELISM AND STRATEGIES USED**

In this section, we are going to discover and understand the biblical perspective on mission and evangelism. It is this understanding which will guide us in revisiting the way mission is supposed to be done as opposed to the way the church in Malawi looks at mission and evangelism. Biblical perspective on Mission is very crucial in identifying the major causes that might have contributed to ineffective and unproductive mission efforts the church in Malawi has been undertaking for many years. Important to this section will also be identifying strategies which must be used in order to make a difference in fishing men for Christ through Mission and Evangelism.

#### **5.1 Biblical Concept of Mission and Its Foundation**

The biblical idea of mission is a central theme that runs throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The word mission comes from the Latin verb *missio*, which means “to send.” So literally, mission(s) has to do with sending. In the scriptures we see the verb to send being used over and over in a multitude of ways. But there is a sense in which the

whole life of the church and the whole experience of the Christian are rooted ultimately in some kind of sending that is founded in the authority and the action of God Himself.<sup>170</sup> Many people participate in evangelism and mission work without hearing the words of commissioning “to go.” Without this confirmation, evangelism work becomes human effort in reaching out to the lost world. The danger is that people might participate in evangelism and mission with personal and private motives. They are attracted by the demands of the flesh, not the Spirit.

It is God who institutes, sanctifies and mandates the mission of the church.<sup>171</sup> God is the ultimate source of mission. The salvation of people is His prerogative.<sup>172</sup> The church today must realize it is carrying a mandate which needs to be done with approval and authority from God. God has authority to commission anyone he wants to send. Mission goes beyond just being sent, to the actual function or task which God wants those he sends out to do. The church has a great duty and responsibility of supporting those called by God to perform the task of presenting the gospel for the salvation of the people whom God wants to save. In summary, the biblical concept of mission encompasses the authority of the one who sends; the obedience of the one sent, a task to be accomplished; the power to accomplish the task and the purpose within the moral framework of God’s covenant working of judgment or redemption.<sup>173</sup> The statement

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<sup>170</sup> [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org).

<sup>171</sup> [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org).

<sup>172</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 6.

<sup>173</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 6.



above is so comprehensive in that it points to the source and the authority of mission, who is God, and the reaction of the servants in obedience to the call. It is those who have a living relationship with God who are able to get the call. Their motivation is the salvation of the people. They also realize that the work will be done in total dependence upon God. And glory and honor is attributed to God who made all things possible if some people are saved.

#### *5.1.1 God, the Source of Mission*

The discussion above has shown that mission begins with God. The mission activities displayed in both the Old and New Testaments show that God is the primary agent. He is the subject of mission, and the church only participates in God's mission.<sup>174</sup> The initiator is not the church but God. The mission of the church has no independent existence. God is the chief actor in the drama of salvation: people are merely bit players" says Scott (1980: 46). The chief aim of the sending God is salvation of his people in the inclusive sense. His love is the chief motive displayed throughout the Bible. The Bible strongly accentuates love of God's motive for his mission and for the setting up of his church. Therefore, mission is of God, and he is the source. He has the agenda of where his salvation is directed and whom he wants to save.

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<sup>174</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 6.

### *5.1.2 The Trinitarian Basis for Mission*

The Bible shows how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved in mission. Although one cannot precisely draw the line on how each person in the Triune God is involved, a general distinction can be made on the basis of Scripture.<sup>175</sup> It is clear from the Bible that the Father sends the Son (John. 3:16), the Son sends his disciples and his church (Matt. 28:18-20, John. 17:18) and the Holy Spirit equips and guides the disciples (John. 14:26, 16:13; Acts 2). The Bible shows that the whole Trinity is involved in mission. Scott observes that in the Old Testament the Father is of greatest importance, in the Gospels God the Son is pre-eminent, while God the Holy Spirit is foremost in Epistles.<sup>176</sup>

### *5.1.3 God the Father*

God the Father has been engaged in mission work throughout the history of mankind. The Bible presents a continuous series of God's messengers to present his message. The first biblical character is Abraham. He is called from Ur to become the carrier of God's blessings to the nations (Gen. 12:13).<sup>177</sup> When God calls someone, there is always a mission that is laid ahead of that individual to fulfill. As for Abraham, the

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<sup>175</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 6.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> [www.ligoneir.org](http://www.ligoneir.org).

task was very clear, that of being a blessing. This was a way of preaching to the other nations about the only true God.

Another character worth mentioning is Moses. He was sent to be the agent of Israel's redemption (Ex. 3:1:13).<sup>178</sup> It is God the father who had the mission of saving his chosen people to go out of the land of slavery to the Promised Land. God appointed Moses to accomplish this mission. The whole process for them to be released from captivity shows that God was at work using his servant, Moses. He was equipped by God to do the work.<sup>179</sup> Where human effort failed, God came in to help his servant. Moses could not divide the waters of the Red Sea, but God did. He was a servant under the instructions of God all the time.

#### *5.1.4 God the Son*

Jesus is the Son sent by the Father and an anointed one by the Spirit to be the bearer of God's Kingdom. Jesus takes over from the Father: "as the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John. 20:21). During his ministry Jesus called disciples whom He could send out as fishers of people (Mk. 1:17). After he had accomplished his early ministry and before he ascended into heaven, Jesus sent his disciples into the world to do

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<sup>178</sup> Board for Theological Studies Booklet, 7.

<sup>179</sup> The NIV Bible.

mission work (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus continues to send his church on mission, and just as he promised his presence to the apostles, he promises it to his on-going church.<sup>180</sup>

#### *5.1.5 God the Holy Spirit*

The role of the Holy Spirit in the world-wide mission is vital. The Holy Spirit is the active agent of mission. Jesus had to make the disciples understand this right from the beginning. They were to be his witness in the world but not without the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost his power was manifested immediately and abundantly in the experience of the evangelists (Acts 2). Witnessing for Christ in the world is carried out under the rule and guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>181</sup> He equips the church always and goes before the church in her missionary journeys. He changes people and opens the doors for the church's message. It can be concluded, in short, that it is only by dependence upon the Holy Spirit that the church can do mission.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Board for Theological Studies Booklet, 7.

<sup>181</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 7.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

### *5.1.6 The Church*

Throughout the Bible and history, God uses human agents to accomplish his mission which he has. An overemphasis on the divine task of mission poses a danger to the whole concept of mission because by so doing human responsibility disappears.<sup>183</sup> Mission is not only God's task, it is also the task of the church. It is, as a matter of fact; impossible to think of mission without dealing with the church. Jesus sends the church (John. 17:18, 20:21). The church in turn sends its members (Rom. 10:15; Acts 13:13). Practically speaking mission involves the whole life of the church. The church exists by and for mission.<sup>184</sup> Mission is involved in both communicating and passing on the Good News to those outside, and in establishing and building up of churches.

### *Conclusion*

This section has emphasized the need to realize the source of mission and the authority which the source has in evangelism and mission. Churches must have this realization that they are being obedient to the mission which God has towards specific people for their salvation. The research has shown there is little awareness of God's calling the church to embark on evangelism and mission. Hence evangelism and mission are taken as activities of the church to fulfill a program and as a tradition. This surely has

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<sup>183</sup> [www.ligonier.com](http://www.ligonier.com) (missions).

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

led to a poor yield because God was not at the center of all the activities the church was doing. Therefore, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be fully involved in mission, bringing people to the saving knowledge of God.

The other thing we find striking in this section is the privilege the church has been given in participating in God's plan in the salvation of humanity. It is a privilege which requires getting the mandate and authority, to do exactly what the master wants to be done, where, when and by whom. Any human efforts to save people are ruled out here completely. Salvation belongs to the Triune God alone.

## 5.2 Worldwide Missionary Task

Worldwide missionary activities were in the beginning viewed as tasks which must be done by a special group of people. A missionary, in the eyes of Africans and people from other third world countries, was a man who was white and came from the European countries.<sup>185</sup> It is this thinking that had to be challenged for mission activities to be undertaken by the whole body of Christ

During the 20th century it was realized that mission is the obligation of the whole Christian Church and every confessing Christian. The whole Church of Christ started to see the whole world as its responsibility.<sup>186</sup> It is no longer a division between West and

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<sup>185</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 12.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

East, between the first worlds and the third worlds, between mission boards and mission fields, between Christian countries and heathen countries. There is no country which is not a mission field. Everywhere, the Christian must prepare for the coming kingdom. In western world, the period of the Corpus Christianum has passed, and the church has become again foreign body in the world. Secularization and de-Christianization have disintegrated the Corpus Christianum so that we can no longer call countries in the West Christian countries.<sup>187</sup> They also, like any other, become an object of the worldwide missionary task. The whole world has become a missionary field and as a consequence the world-wide missionary task is to be undertaken everywhere.

#### *5.2.1 Worldwide Mission Organizations in Existence*

There are many missionary bodies which have been born out of the need for reaching out to the whole world with the gospel. Much as we could appreciate that the Christian church has grown everywhere in the world, it is at the same time true that everywhere in the world Christians exist as a minority in a secularized world. Given this missionary task is the responsibility of all Christians alike everywhere. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism meeting in Mexico City in 1963 came up with the expression “MISSION IN SIX CONTINENTS.” The expression advocates the following resolutions:

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 14.

- a. The churches which are summoned to mission are churches everywhere.
- b. The world to which the church is summoned is the entire world.
- c. Everywhere there is a missionary situation.
- d. Mission is the responsibility of all the Christians everywhere.
- e. Mission can never be undertaken amongst unbelievers far away without giving the same attention to unbelievers nearby.
- f. Everywhere there are people who have not confessed Christ as their Saviour.<sup>188</sup>

Christian movements for mission and evangelism have been there since the dawn of Christianity. These movements have grown numerically throughout the world in order to carry out the mandate of preaching the gospel to all the people worldwide.

The above observations have proved true in the subsequent years. There has been great zeal by individuals and churches in undertaking mission seriously. The following are but a few mission organizations which are actively involved in mission because of the current need:

- 1. Bethany International
- 2. Ethnos 360
- 3. Operation Mobilization
- 4. Send International
- 5. International Mission Board
- 6. China Inland Mission
- 7. Team
- 8. OMF International,
- 9. Africa Inland Mission
- 10. Mission Go.<sup>189</sup>

It is also impressive to note that there are churches which have a growing passion for mission and evangelism. This is important because the members are motivated to become missionaries in their own right.

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<sup>188</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 18.

<sup>189</sup> [www.justdisciple.com](http://www.justdisciple.com) – missionary organizations.



### *5.2.2 Networking and Unity of Purpose in Mission*

Mission work, as already reflected above, is an ongoing task. This is why the various organizations and boards have been formed to coordinate mission activities. These organizations play different roles in mission. Some provide training and send out people to mission fields, those who have been called. Some organizations support missionaries with financial and material resources and oversee mission activities.<sup>190</sup>

There are some organizations and churches which have made positive efforts in uniting worldwide mission organizations so that they can learn and benefit from one another in sharing information and tools. Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in California-USA made such an initiative in bringing together mission organizations. The initiative is called Finishing the Task (FTT). It is a movement of 1,600 churches and organizations coming together to reach the Unengaged, Unreached People Groups (UUPGs) – those with no access to a Bible, believers or a body of Christ.<sup>191</sup>

The network's history dates back to the 2000 Lausanne Conference in Amsterdam where a key group of mission leaders began a strategic relationship for the purpose of seeing every people group engaged with a suitable church planting initiative.<sup>192</sup>

FTT has done incredible work advancing toward the target of adopting and engaging every people group. Of the list of UUPGs of over 500, almost 233 were adopted

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. [www.finishthetask.com](http://www.finishthetask.com).

<sup>190</sup> [www.team.org](http://www.team.org).

<sup>191</sup> Ibid

<sup>192</sup> Ibid

to receive engagement efforts at the 2019 Finish the Task Conference of which the researcher of this dissertation was in attendance.<sup>193</sup>

It was clearly spelt out that the network has entered a new era of broader vision and greater partnership where the goal for Bibles, believers and bodies of Christ for everyone everywhere will be reached.

Since 2006, organizations have come together to give reports on what is happening in the mission field. Finish the Task, as the name of the forum suggests, shares a lot of information on what is happening in the field to finish the task commissioned by the Lord Jesus of going into the world, making disciples of all nations (Matt.28:18-20). Reports include people groups who have been reached with the gospel, the methods used, successes made and challenges faced. Some organizations benefit from those advanced in mission work. Other groups of people who were not reached by the gospel for a long time have access now to the gospel because of the shared information.

Technology has also played a great role in reaching out with the gospel to the marginalized and challenged groups of people like the dearth and the blind. They now have the privilege of the gospel by using signs and listening to audio equipment, respectively, designed for gospel outreach. The Jesus Film is also accessible to groups of people who are illiterate. This group can be receptive to the gospel through visual materials. All this is an effort to reach out to people all over the world with the gospel.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> [www.finishthetask.com](http://www.finishthetask.com).

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

Another good thing is that there is no wastage of resources. It is established through the discussions on who is doing what, where. So the unreached people groups are easily identified and efforts are being made to reach these groups. Hence every year, there is a conference of Finish the Task with specific tasks to be achieved.

### *5.2.3 Available Opportunities for Mission*

The forums discussed above have highlighted great opportunities for evangelism and mission. There were countries which were closed to the gospel which have now been opened up for mission. Those organizations that did not know about the open mission fields have taken courage to venture into such places as a result of the shared information.<sup>195</sup> Hence, the whole church is called to undertake a missionary task to the world. It is estimated that about only 33% of mankind is Christian worldwide. Indeed, some may be by name only. There are areas where there are hardly any Christians.<sup>196</sup> If there may be a few, they are as a drop in the sea and often looked upon as strangers by their own people. Constitutionally, some of the countries of the world were for a long time closed to any missionary effort. This has largely changed and most of them are accessible in some ways now. In contrast to countries which were closed there are

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<sup>195</sup> [www.finishthetask.com](http://www.finishthetask.com).

<sup>196</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 8.

countries which are open and need missionaries. Some need not only local missionaries but foreign as well e.g., Japan, Taiwan.<sup>197</sup>

### 5.3 Previously used Principles and Strategies in Mission

Mission work was done using different principles and strategies depending on the motives which the mission bodies had and emphasized. In this section we are going to look at some of these principles and strategies. But first we should look at motivations which inspired the early missionaries to leave their homelands for missions. In fact, there were both pure and impure motives for mission. Some of them will be reflected below.

#### *5.3.1 Motives for Doing Mission Work*

Throughout mission history, missionaries went out to do mission work but with mixed motives. Some of them were pure, having good intentions more especially for the salvation of the people who were lost in sin. However, there were others who went to mission field with impure motives, for personal gain and not for building the Kingdom of God. Below are few examples of pure and impure motives for mission work.

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

### *5.3.1.1 The Motive of Obedience*

The motive of obedience played a very definite role throughout the missionary task. The missionary task is nothing more than obedience to the command of the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20). The motive has inspired countless thousands of missionaries to dedicate their lives to the missionary task.<sup>198</sup> So if one gives up mission both at home and abroad, he is being disobedient to his Lord. Obedient servants of the Lord would approach mission work with fear. Such missionaries would do God's work by following biblical principles of love and compassion. The love which God displayed to the world through Jesus Christ would be reflected by them. They would preach and practice love to the indigenous people. This was a clear sign that they were Christ's representative on earth. It is love which drew many people to become Christians. The desire of the missionaries was to see that people were saved from their sins and are destined for heaven. The missionaries would be glad that they had obeyed the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Go and make disciples of all nations.... (Matt. 28:18-20).<sup>199</sup> In their strategy, they would make personal relationships with the people as they minister to them the word of God. In the same way, today, churches on every continent need to be continually reminded of their need to obey the command of the Lord.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 8.

<sup>199</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 8.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 9

### *5.3.1.2 The Motives of Mercy and Pity*

The Bible strongly accents the motives of mercy and pity in mission work. Jonah was accused of lacking these qualities when he tried to evade his missionary task to the Gentiles of Nineveh. Paul writes to the congregations that they who have been rescued and now live by the love of God must now reflect that very same love to others through the work of mission.<sup>201</sup> The objects of God's mercy and pity must now have become the instruments and communicators to pass on that mercy and pity to others. In the treatment of new believers, the missionaries were to be aware that they are dealing with people who require patience. They are like babies who need the mercy of the grown ups for them to mature. They should have pity towards those who are still failing to walk as Christ wants. Patience is the principle they used, and the strategy would be walking with the new believers for them to grow into mature Christians.<sup>202</sup> The missionaries should set good examples to be followed by the new believers. Christ wants to reach out to others via his congregation. But the church can only act as God's bridge to the world if she is filled with the very same love, mercy and pity as he or herself has received from God. The missionaries would give back what they received from God in such a measure that would translate who they were and what their motives were.

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<sup>201</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 8.

<sup>202</sup> [www.ywamyosemite.org](http://www.ywamyosemite.org)

### *5.3.1.3 The Motive of Doxology (praise)*

Praise to God's name is another of the motives for mission found throughout the New Testament. Paul says his concern is that "... the word of the Lord may speed on the triumph, through the world and that, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (2 Thess.3:1 / Phil. 2). The motive of doxology has inspired the life and work of any missionary, who during the centuries, has participated in the missionary enterprise.<sup>203</sup> Missionaries fulfilled this through studies of passages from the book of Psalms and other biblical passages, and elevation of the talents of music. These ways helped people to realize that God needs praises from people because of His wonderful works.

There were also some impure motives for mission work which also differed in the principles and strategies used.

### *5.3.1.4 Imperialistic Motive*

One of the most frequent criticisms made of missionary work, particularly of missions originating in the west, is that it was done for imperialist reasons. By imperialism it means the attempts by one state to use another people as a means to achieve its own goals.<sup>204</sup> Missionaries have often been accused of having been emissaries

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<sup>203</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 9.

<sup>204</sup> Board for Theological Studies Handbook, 9.

preparing the way for the occupation of the new lands by colonizers. In this way the missionaries were law enforcers among the people. They used the Bible as a shield for the accomplishment of their goals. The missionaries did not have the people they were evangelizing at heart. So, there was too much subjugation and superiority syndrome. The indigenous people were regarded as inferior races, not created in the same image. With the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi, they brought with them apartheid. The Malawian pastors were forbidden to wear shoes. These missionaries said it was a sign of pride.<sup>205</sup> Only the whites were free to wear shoes. No Malawian was allowed to enter a white man's house to avoid defiling and contaminating the house. Even in the church, the whites had special seats, away from the indigenous people.<sup>206</sup> This shows that they had little concern for the salvation of the Malawians. Therefore, the indigenous people were just used for the personal achievements of the whites. There was mistrust and unfriendly atmosphere between the indigenous people and the missionaries. Hence the principle of social distancing prevailed within the community and a spirit of boss and servants existed.

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<sup>205</sup> Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi*, page 48.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, 49.



#### *5.3.1.5 The Cultural Motive*

During the 19th Century, mission work went hand in hand with a transfer of the missionary's culture. For example, some westerners believed that missionaries should go only to those areas where western culture had already penetrated and should seek to transmit and transfer to those people the deeper values of the western culture.<sup>207</sup> They believed that mission work was a cultural enterprise and that mission work primarily accompanied a general transfer of culture.

In their assessment, the culture of the indigenous people was primitive, inferior and demonic. Because of such a mindset, they were harsh in dealing with the African culture. Their desire was to erase everything that was indigenous. Some punishments were inflicted on Africans who failed to adhere to the principles and ways of the whites. In such circumstances, the gospel failed to achieve its intended use of transforming the spiritual lives of the indigenous people. As a result, Malawians saw the whites as another group of people who came with a second type of slavery. The Malawians who lived close to such missionaries observed that they did not display lives of holiness.

#### *5.3.1.6 The Commercial Motive*

Though the commercial motive never dominated, it often became an accessory motive and a point in the "propaganda" for mission. For example, David Livingstone wove genuine missionary motives with commercial interests. In 1856 Livingstone

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<sup>207</sup> Board for Theological Studies handbook, 9.

expressed in England his missionary aims as follows: “sending the gospel to the heathen must include much more than is implied in the usual picture of the missionary, namely a man going with a Bible under his arm. The promotion of commerce must be attended to more speedily than anything else.”<sup>208</sup>

Some missionaries came as farmers, growing crops such as tea and coffee. In such places, people were asked to work for free, which was called ‘Thangata’ translated as working for no pay. In Malawi, this took place in the districts of Thyolo and Mulanje in the southern region. The people did not work of their free will, but by being forced by those in authority including the missionaries.

### *Conclusion*

The above information illustrates missionaries went to the mission field because of different things which motivated them. The above impure motives have not been sited to discredit the wonderful work missionaries have done in Malawi. It has been brought in to reflect that not all missionaries had the sole intentions for the sole salvation of the indigenous people in the mission field.

#### 5.3.2 Strategies and Methods for Doing Mission

Missionaries used varied and diverse strategies and methods in reaching the world with the gospel. Since they are methods which many mission organizations used, only a

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 10

few examples which I hope the CCAP church and other denominations in Malawi would benefit from will be discussed here.

#### *5.3.2.1 Spiritual Character of a Missionary (Matt. 5:16)*

The character of any missionary must be a great witness to the work Christ has accomplished on the cross. Matt.5:16 says, "... Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." The most distinctive and obvious feature for all the missionaries was their exemplary life. Before any message could be preached, something had to be shown. The crucial aspect of a missionary is not what one proclaims, but what one lives, who one is.<sup>209</sup> It is true that a transformed life preaches things that no words can match. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."<sup>210</sup> The first and foremost principle of any method of mission is the development of the spiritual character of missionaries. If the missionary fails to display his spiritual life to the societies they serve, then the mission of winning people to Christ will be a total failure.

Missionaries ought to exemplify holiness and direct people to grow in a faith that leads toward holiness. When missionaries begin to live a holy life in a pagan society, they have begun to offer the first and foremost basic lesson to the people they go to serve.

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<sup>209</sup> [www.missions.hchc.edu](http://www.missions.hchc.edu).

<sup>210</sup> Father Luke A. Veronis, *An International Conference on Mission and Evangelism*- Brookline, 1995, 1.

Without this desire to become holy themselves, and then to lead people towards holiness, missionaries will be no different than the humanitarian workers.<sup>211</sup>

Missionaries need to be carriers of God's grace. The purpose of mission is precisely this, to reflect the holiness, the goodness, the hope that comes through experiencing the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; to act as vessels carrying God's grace.

Another essential aspect of the missionary's character is his or her humble, loving, patient, servant attitude. This brings the missionary to the level of the people he has come to serve.<sup>212</sup> He identifies with them in all manner of life except that which is contrary to the word of God. This is a unique strategy by mission bodies in sending their missionaries out for great impact on the society.

#### 5.3.2.2 *Mission Teams (Mark 6:7)*

The second principle and method in mission is creating a team, which is an example of a community. This is a fundamental principle because it teaches that every missionary is a part of a team. Jesus Christ set a good example when he created a team of twelve disciples and sent these disciples out two by two. A group of missionaries can proclaim the gospel loudly through the example they establish. They teach their first lesson in the Christian community through the love, care, respect and compassion shown

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<sup>211</sup> [www.missions.hchc.edu](http://www.missions.hchc.edu).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid

within their missionary fellowship.<sup>213</sup> Another benefit of a team is diversity. The more parts exposed to a non-believing community, the more likely the non-believers will find their bridge into the Church. The Bible talks about many kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit. So, we need each other according to the variety of gifts God has given us individually.

A mission team should be enriched with a group of prayer warriors.<sup>214</sup> There should be active workers in the field but also a strong prayer team at home. This may not seem to be a method of evangelism but in fact it is one of the most essential ingredients to a fruitful mission. Prayer should be seen as the foundation for all mission activities. Paul emphasized the need for prayers during his ministry and work.<sup>215</sup> In every letter he asked believers to pray for him to succeed in his ministry. This is also a very wonderful strategy of reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ through mission.

#### 5.3.2.3 Proclamation of the Gospel Message (1 Corinthians 9:22)

The third method of mission involves proclaiming the spoken gospel in relevant and meaningful ways. In this area the first attitude missionaries must cultivate are patience, flexibility, and creativity.<sup>216</sup> This does not imply that they should compromise

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<sup>213</sup> [www.missions.hchc.edu](http://www.missions.hchc.edu).

<sup>214</sup> Father Luke A. Veronis, *An International Conference on Mission and Evangelism*- Brookline, 1995, 2.

<sup>215</sup> [www.missions.hchc.edu](http://www.missions.hchc.edu).

<sup>216</sup> Ibid

the gospel preached. The absolutes of God remain the same all the time. A missionary must realize that change takes time to be realized. The people should be given enough time for transformation to fully develop and be incorporated into the lives as new believers. Missionaries must also know that issues in the mission field cannot be dealt with in the same way as in the established churches. A worship service can be shortened to allow people to have ample time to ask questions and discussions in areas they did not understand in the course of the preaching. Hence flexibility should be exercised by the missionaries.

Missionaries ought to emphasize the importance of practicing the faith and making use of relevant materials for establishing a church on a strong biblical foundation. The gospel must be presented according to the cultural context of the listeners. So, proclamation of the gospel should be done with creativity, flexibility, boldness, contextualization and truth, which are essential characteristics of a proper method for mission.<sup>217</sup>

#### *5.3.2.4 Training of Indigenous Leaders (2 Tim. 2.2)*

The fourth method of mission work is the training of indigenous leadership. From the beginning to the end, a missionary has to seek out interested believers who will take the reigns of leadership as soon as possible. Missionaries should keep in mind the fact

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<sup>217</sup> Father Luke A. Veronis, *An International Conference on Mission and Evangelism*- Brookline, 1995, 2.

that they are working themselves out of a job.<sup>218</sup> They ought to work and live among the people as if no foreign worker, but a local person, will succeed them. Good leaders who have the welfare of the mission of God at heart think about the succession of leadership back before the fruit of the mission work is realized.

Missionaries need to align their goals and work with such a time perspective. Their mission is not to preach or to baptize all the people in the area. The goal needs to be training of selected leaders who themselves have the zeal, desire, inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit to fulfill this work.

Missionaries also need to spend quality time in personal mentorship of the indigenous leaders. The new converts must be trained to be missionaries from the beginning of mission work. The question should always be, “If we leave today out of the area unexpectedly, will the church survive?”<sup>219</sup> Therefore, this is very important that the indigenous people be disciplined well in advance for them to develop skills while working together and along the missionaries. This is what Jesus did by giving his disciples on-the-job training before he left them to lead the church.

#### *5.3.2.5 Understanding the Culture of the People*

It is very important for missionaries to know the culture of the people they are to do mission work. Duane Elmer in his book, “Cross-cultural Connections” has

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid

<sup>219</sup> [www.missions.hchc.edu](http://www.missions.hchc.edu).

emphasized the importance of cultural knowledge and how it helps all people in building good relationships without regarding the purpose for the relocation or visit to the different cultural area.<sup>220</sup> He explains, among other things, that whatever business we are to do in any area, it is done with the people. You need to create a relationship for that business to be accomplished. He has also talked about communication as key to having a successful business or ministry everywhere one goes. The communication is both verbal and non-verbal. One needs to have a grasp of the language for through it you also find the culture of the people. Without the knowledge of someone's culture, it will be very easy to have misunderstandings and confusions. How you communicate Christ, and his love depends on how people in the culture perceive and judge you. This is really important that the little cultural things one will be able to follow, the more the opportunity of sharing the Gospel will be available to him.<sup>221</sup>

It must be noted that all human beings individually, are products of cultural heritage, which dictates how we see the world and how we interact with the world. There is always a wrong assumption that everyone sees and interacts with the world the same way we do. We are therefore asked, not to bring judgment quickly on people of other cultures. There is great help in withholding judgment. Any behavior must be cross checked with the question of why the other person behaved the way they did.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Duane Elmer, *Cross-cultural connections* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter Varsity Press, 2002, 35.

<sup>221</sup> Duane Elmer, *Cross-cultural connections* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press), 2002, 38.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.



God reveals himself through all the cultures of the world and all the people within those cultures. It is impossible to bring God down to be God of only one culture. Hence, he cannot be explained from only one cultural perspective.<sup>223</sup> At the same time, realistic expectations protect us from major disappointments and problems. These also help in making godly responses and decisions when meeting unmet expectations. It is therefore recommended that one should find enough information about the area where one is going well in advance. This gives a picture of what you should expect when you go there.

The research has revealed that mission trips which are made by the churches are done without first of all finding out the culture of the people of the areas the teams go for mission. Even within the same area, there are differences in the way people relate to one another. For example, some societies observe special protocols when authorities are to be addressed. If one does not know about this, then the people are offended; hence, the whole population turns against you.

#### *5.3.2.6 Equipping and Sharing Responsibility*

Just like in evangelism, team building is a strong strategy in mission. A team comprised of people with different talents, experiences and spiritual maturity. Jesus Christ gave us the best example by having a group of twelve disciples with various skills and expertise. This is an enriching way of boosting the ministry dynamics. The intention

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 39.

of creating such a group is for discipleship making.<sup>224</sup> The team is comprised of people who have been selected from among the members of the church according to their gifts or who are faithful, available and teachable in certain ministry areas. Craig Ott says, “Since the basic building block of a church is the disciple, church planting must remain disciple making.”<sup>225</sup> These members have to be trained for effective ministry.

As it has already been alluded to, mission is done with little seriousness in the CCAP church and other denominations in Malawi by fulfilling it as part of the activities which were on the program for the church. It is my cry that if the church can follow biblical principles, there will be great transformation in both mission and evangelism. The team should have people who have a calling for mission and know their particular area which they are going to do to impact the society. This helps to align them according to their ministry specialty. Team members must have a clear vision and must have the ministry at heart if they are to make a difference in Kingdom building. They must be aware of their main obligation as a member of the team. It is a well-equipped group that would go full throttle in turning the world upside down as the Apostles of Jesus Christ and the early believers did in contagiously sharing the gospel wherever they went.

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<sup>224</sup> Craig Ott, *Global Church Planting* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 80.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

#### 5.4 New Principles and Strategies in Evangelism

In this section, we would like to provide detailed information on the biblical principles and strategies in evangelism based on the model given by our Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry. It is a model from which the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and other denominations would benefit much if implemented properly. The issue at hand is that the church has for a long time not been fruitful in evangelistic endeavors due to factors much of which could be lack of using biblical principles in evangelism and mission. Billy Graham, in his foreword to the book, “The Master Plan of Evangelism” by Robert Coleman, said, “Dr. Coleman has gone back to the Bible and has asked one critical question: what was Christ’s strategy of evangelism? In so doing he has pointed us to the unchanging, simple (and yet profound) biblical principles which must undergird any authentic evangelistic outreach.”<sup>226</sup> It is these authentic evangelistic activities which produce abundant fruit, thereby growing the church where there was no church. When I took the course on Evangelism and Church Planting, I was very impressed with the way Robert Coleman addresses the issue of evangelism by beginning with thought provoking questions. The real heart of evangelism is to bring people to the Kingdom of God whereby establishing a visible body of believers, the church. He pushes churches to assess themselves in what they are achieving in their pursuit for church growth. Such questions as, “Is evangelism worth doing? Does it accomplish its intended purpose? Has evangelism made an expansion of many people to become dedicated followers of Jesus

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<sup>226</sup> Billy Graham in Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Fleming H. Revell, Grand Rapids, 2006, 9.

Christ?”<sup>227</sup> These are pertinent questions which must be at the heart of the church in evaluating their past evangelism efforts. In other words, the church must have a clear objective in doing evangelism. In the case of Jesus Christ, he had a clear objective to achieve during his ministry, which was to save out of the world a people for himself and build a church of the Spirit which would never perish.<sup>228</sup> Therefore everything he did and said was aimed at achieving this goal. In other words, the objective is a mission or a goal to achieve at the end of whatever one is doing. This objective was achieved by using different principles which will be discussed in this section.

#### *5.4.1 Selection of Members for Evangelism*

This is an important strategy in evangelism. It is a principle that helps people to realize their competencies among the many people in the church. A leader of the church has the mandate to choose from among the church members those who can be equipped for specific functionality in the church. Coleman says, “The more concentrated the size of the group being taught, the greater the opportunity for effective instruction.”<sup>229</sup> He explains that this was a great strategy in choosing few men to lead the multitude after

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<sup>227</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006), 13.

<sup>228</sup> Coleman, 17

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

Christ had gone. These few people seemed to understand the objective and were willing to learn. He called them for a great mission of taking the gospel to the masses.

The research has shown that churches do not choose people for proper training as evangelists. It is very questionable if these people grasp the exact purpose for the field trips which are made periodically. Some go to these mission trips without any form of training. It is not surprising to find out that some go for mission trips without serious commitment to take the gospel to those who are still languishing in sin. Leaders of the church are therefore implored to invest time, energy and resources in concentrating on a few faithful, available, willing and teachable members of the church who will be able to take the gospel far. This strategy demonstrates that masses can easily be won if they are provided leaders to follow. Well trained leaders can command a large following.

It is therefore very important for Nkhoma CCAP leadership and the other denominations to consider training core groups which will embark on the task of calling people to the Kingdom of God. If things are not working out in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, it is evident that the biblical principle of selection has not been practiced in identifying people who should guide evangelism after giving them solid ground for their task ahead and be followed by the masses.

#### *5.4.2 Association with a Leader*

Jesus Christ spent much of his time with the disciples, people who were selected for a specific objective to be achieved. The church these days provides structured lessons for those who are willing to undertake ministry seriously are enrolled. Coleman says that

these structured lessons provide head knowledge to the learners. They understand how things done in a certain way would give the kind of results at the end. He further says that by association the disciples gained knowledge before it was understood by explanation.<sup>230</sup> Knowledge was communicated by the Lord Jesus through his personal life and example. There were other things which the disciples did not understand, showing that knowledge preceded understanding. The disciples would ask the Master, “How can we know the way?” (John 14:5-6).<sup>231</sup>

The principle mentioned here is twofold. First, those who are willing and committed to serve the Lord must be given ample time to be at the feet of an able leader who should whole heartedly give his time to associate with the members. In this case we are looking at the members who have been selected by the leader. He should groom them by his daily life experiences. They should learn from him how he prays, stays with them and live his daily life in winning people for the Kingdom of God. It is an unstructured natural learning process which will help the learners to gain experience since they will be able to ask about what they do not understand.

It is a very unfortunate thing that there are many people in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod who go out participating in evangelism and mission before they sit at the feet of able leaders to inculcate in their lives what evangelism really means and how best to approach it. As reflected in the questionnaires, it is hard to produce the best results by

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<sup>230</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006), 34.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid

people who have not been under a natural environment, learning from trusted leaders through association with them.

Second, those that have been exposed practically to the skills of evangelism through observation of life experiences are the ones who are qualified to be deployed to the field for evangelism. These members in turn should spend enough time with the new converts in the mission field. They should be able to associate with them so that they learn on how a believer lives his or her daily life. It is sad to say, the research has revealed that all churches use any available members of the church as long as she is available at that particular time. Furthermore, the evangelism teams stay in the mission field for a very short time of two to three days, once a year. They make another trip the following year. In other words, there is totally no association with the new converts to nurture them. The teams fulfill the church's program without following the example displayed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible.

The policy of Jesus in this section teaches us that whatever method of follow-up the church adopts; it must have as its basis a personal guardian concern for those entrusted to their care. To do otherwise is essentially to abandon new believers to the devil.<sup>232</sup> The principle of association makes sure that the new believer has someone who is mature spiritually and able to impact someone's life to become a future leader to disciple and nurture new believers.

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<sup>232</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006), 42-43.

The system currently being followed by churches in CCAP Nkhoma Synod does not provide for such a caring, loving and discipleship environment. Hence many people are lost to the snares and cares of the world.

#### *5.4.3 Consecration of the Members*

Another secret which our Lord Jesus Christ reveals in the Bible as a principle for successful evangelism and mission is setting people apart for this specific task. When the disciples were called to follow him (Mark 2:14, Matt. 9:9, Luke 5:27, John 1:43) they were called to become fishers of men. This demanded them to become students to learn new things necessary in this calling. They abandoned their past carriers and stayed with Jesus who called them to ministry. Following Jesus required obedience. They were to submit to his authority. They also had to count the cost of following Jesus. Similarly, the disciples had to follow him selflessly. Coleman states that if the church is so frustrated in its witness to the world, it is because there is indifference by both the clergy and the laity to the commands of God.<sup>233</sup> In consecration there is self-denial and dedication to the instructions of the Master and the ministry he gives his chosen people.

The statements above illustrate a very important biblical principle which must be adhered to by churches in our day for successful evangelism and mission. A small group of people must be dedicated to the work of evangelism and mission. These should be

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<sup>233</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006),



trusted people who are willing to leave everything else behind and focus on this task alone.

The research has revealed that most groups of people who are involved in evangelism and mission in the churches do not regularly go with the group. Some go for a mission trip once and it ends there because they have other things to do or the leadership feels that others should also have an opportunity to participate in evangelism and mission. This weakens the effectiveness of the group. This means people evangelism is regarded as a social trip where members of the church must be involved without any discrimination.

#### *5.4.4 Calling of the Members*

Calling, though very close to selection, is another biblical principle which must be followed by churches in our day for effective evangelism and mission. Members who are devoted to the cause of evangelism and mission must have testimony of their calling. They should be those who are born in the family of God and are convinced that the Lord wants them to reach out to other people with the gospel of salvation. This is indeed another criterion for building an evangelism and mission team. Evangelism and mission are spiritual weapons for fighting spiritual battles. Those whom the church sends out to do evangelism and mission must be spiritual warriors. This is very possible when people have a great sense of their calling and know who has called them.

The research has revealed that many people who participate in evangelism and mission work are not very strong Christians. They lack a testimony that they are born

again Christians and that God has given them a second calling to evangelize the world. It should be clear that such people cannot deliver what they do not have. Hence their ministry is less effective. I urge all denominations to critically assess people who have a calling and only those with such testimony should be entrusted with the task of evangelism and mission.

#### *5.4.5 Shared Vision*

The Bible clearly states that without vision people perish (Hosea 4:6). My simple understanding of vision is seeing the future in the present, looking at what will happen in the years to come. Any successful ministry should have a focus and a picture of what it will be in the years to come. Oxford dictionary defines vision as an ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom.<sup>234</sup> If people and organizations fail to plan, they are planning to fail. The church should have a clear picture of what they would love to be or achieve in their evangelism and mission efforts in the next given number of years. This becomes a driving force for any organization to work towards the intended goal.

The research has shown that many churches do evangelism and mission without proper planning. They do not have goals to achieve and strategies on how to achieve the intended results. If denominations learn how best to put on paper what they want to do

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<sup>234</sup> [www.lexico.com](http://www.lexico.com).

and achieve in the next coming years before they embark on the program, it will help a lot in determining and counting the cost of the work ahead.

#### *5.4.6 Impartation of the Members*

Impartation has to do with the giving and receiving of spiritual gifts, blessings, healing and baptism in the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry. It is the transference of these gifts from one man or woman of God to another, especially through the laying on of hands.<sup>235</sup> It is the dedication and setting apart of some members of the church by presenting them before the Lord for a specific ministry. This is what our example Christ did during his earthly ministry with the disciples.

This is another principle which the Lord Jesus Christ used in preparing the disciples for evangelizing the world. He had a group of disciples who needed to be guided in whatever they were doing. For this reason, Jesus had to breathe on them the Holy Spirit so that they would know the love of God for the lost world. The Holy Spirit helped the disciples to realize that they were involved in a spiritual battle which required the presence of the Spirit of God to lead and fight for them. The life of Jesus was God's revelation in time of his eternal purpose to save for himself a people.<sup>236</sup> This was clearly demonstrated by the Master Jesus Christ in manners which sometimes they could not

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006),

understand and painfully received it such as washing their feet (John 13:1-20).<sup>237</sup> These actions were pointing to one thing, serving others for the Kingdom of God. These actions are hard to be achieved in purely human flesh unless the Spirit of God is in you. The disciples needed this impartation by the Holy Spirit to be leaders of the church in the next generation. A life of humility and servant leadership is possible when God's Spirit is in us.

The disciples needed the life of Jesus in them by the Spirit if they were to do his work and practice his teaching. Coleman emphasizes that evangelistic work without the Holy Spirit is as lifeless as it is meaningless. Only as the Spirit of Christ in us exalts the Son are people drawn to the Father.<sup>238</sup> This principle is a very important element of the believers working for the Kingdom of God. The Spirit of God helps believers to die to themselves and live for Christ.

Practically, the emphasis given by our Lord Jesus Christ is that all evangelistic activities must be done by people who have died to themselves and are filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>239</sup> Frankly speaking, spiritual battles are won by those who are filled by the Spirit of God. Therefore, as evangelism and mission team are being set apart, they should desire to be filled by the Holy Spirit before they start the ministry.

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Coleman, 60.

<sup>239</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006),

There is no single church in the study which has given a convincing statement that their preparation is as serious as it should be in being in the presence of God for filling with the Holy Spirit as much as possible before they depart for evangelism and mission. Therefore, Christ has shown us the need for this principle to be followed to have successful evangelism and mission trips. Regardless of our feeling and take, this still stands as one of the requirements for successful evangelism and mission.

#### *5.4.7 Demonstration*

One way that Jesus taught the disciples what they will be doing as fishers of men was through demonstration. The disciples saw through observation how Christ lived his daily life, which was a school on its own. Everything which he said and did was a personal lesson in reality, and since the disciples were there to notice it, they were learning practically every moment of their waking day. It is a great lesson to leaders who are entrusted with the responsibility of mentoring others to teach by their daily exemplary life. A leader must be prepared to have followers follow him even as he follows Christ (1 Cor.11:1). Learners do the things which they hear and see their leader doing. Leaders demonstrate many things including their prayer life.

Christ demonstrated to his disciples the life of prayer. He was prayerful that the disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. He was impacting their lives all the time he showed dependence on his Father. They also saw that prayer was part of the secret life of Jesus. Therefore, a leader needs to demonstrate areas of importance in ministry so that his students do likewise, as Christ Jesus did.

#### 5.4.8 Delegation

Delegation is a very important principle. Jesus Christ was building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to takeover his work and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.<sup>240</sup> The disciples were not rushed into ministry before they observed what their Master did. They were patient in observing Jesus do several things like teaching crowds of people and healing the sick. This was a great period of preparation for the work ahead of them.

An evangelism team must be delegated to do the work after they see what their leaders do in the field. They need to have informed minds and personal experience through observation for them to do great exploits for the Lord.

The research findings have shown that members who comprise evangelism teams have no delegated authority from either the pastor or the evangelism leader or chairperson. They volunteer themselves to go and participate in evangelistic activities. What they lack, according to the example given by our Lord Jesus, are the first important things such as demonstration and impartation before they are authorized to do the ministry. Coleman writes, “Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.”<sup>241</sup> This is a clear instruction that evangelism needs the blessing of the church. People who go out on behalf

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71. <sup>240</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006),

79. <sup>241</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006),

of the church must be known and receive the authorization from the entire church as a mandate to discharge their ministry well. It also shows that they are servants accountable to the sender, the church. Without delegation, the team comes back home failing to give a report because it was their business not the church's.

#### *5.4.9 Supervision of the Team*

The disciples of Jesus observed him doing the ministry in various areas. There was a time when the disciples were sent out to practice what they saw. Because they were delegated, they came back to their Master with reports. He was there to evaluate and help where they failed and encouraged where they did well. He could not allow them to go ministering without assessing their performance. They were on a very crucial assignment of world evangelization. He had to make sure that everything they did was geared towards reaching the world with the gospel. He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best.<sup>242</sup> The main reason for supervision is that there are many things which happen to frustrate and sidetrack the work. Unless these issues are dealt with by competent leaders, the members become discouraged and defeated.

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid, 86.

#### 5.4.10 Reproduction

This is the last principle which Jesus used in evangelism. He intended that his disciples would produce people who would be like him in and through the worldwide church. He foresaw the duplication of his ministry by what the disciples would do. Through the disciples and like-minded people after them, the ministry would continue to expand to reach the whole world by the Spirit of God. The church had started with the calling of the twelve and was a growing force, like a grain of mustard seed which grows in size and strength until it becomes a tree (Matt. 13:32).<sup>243</sup> It is with this strategy that the Lord planned for the conquest of the world as time passed by with the faithfulness of the disciples. It did not matter how small the group was to start with as long as they reproduced and taught their disciples to reproduce. Craig says, “Evangelism must be done in a way that the new believers can easily imitate, and those new believers must be taught to become next evangelists. Similarly, as the first believers are discipled, they should be discipled in such a way that they can disciple others.”<sup>244</sup>

Although evangelism has been going on for many years in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, the church has not seen much fruit that could lead to church planting. This is an important stage which Jesus Christ told his disciples to do. Church planting is the product of proper evangelism and mission. When many people are drawn to Christ, they need

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<sup>243</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2006), 89.

<sup>244</sup> Craig Ott, 80.



immediately to become members of a church for them to be discipled by mature Christians. This helps them to learn by word and example of their spiritual leaders. Hence this calls for some church members to relocate to new places where the church is busy with mission outreaches. All new Christians who have gone through intensive discipleship program become disciples themselves and reach out to others with the gospel. It is this multiplication syndrome which has been lacking in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod for many years.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the major areas which the researcher advocates as the great biblical principles which the CCAP Nkhoma Synod should use from now on to have successful mission and evangelism efforts. There might be other principles which have not been included in this section; the intention of this research is not exhaustive but filling the gap which needs to be filled by pointing to the basic biblical principles which should help any church to be effective in mission and evangelism.

It has been reflected in the research findings that the CCAP denomination and possibly other denominations in Malawi either did not know about these principles or they have neglected them for reasons best known to them. It is a good chapter which studies the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ as the best example from which churches could emulate for successful mission and evangelism ministry. It is my hope that this research will be enriching not only to the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Malawi, but also to other denominations in Malawi and beyond.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **NKHOMA SYNOD MISSION TEAMS' PERSPECTIVES ON BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FROM THE RESEARCH**

As stated in chapter one, this research was conducted to analyze the impact of seminary training in mission on church leaders and its future implication on the health and growth of the church.

The questionnaire was formulated (see attachment) and sent to ten congregations of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod through the Department of Missions for the CCAP. It was designed that each congregation should receive four questionnaires. The first questionnaire was given to the chair for the mission committee at the congregation level. The second was given to a woman involved in mission, the third to a youth involved in mission, and the last was given to an elder or deacon on the mission committee.

Although the research was conducted at the peak of Covid 19, by the grace of God, all the forty targeted respondents submitted their answered questionnaires to the research assistant from the Mission department. These questionnaires were finally sent to me via DHL.

The findings from this research have indeed given information which might help us to look critically at what seminary training has done for the church leaders. Church leaders have a great role of training mission teams in their congregations before they are sent out into the mission field. The research has clearly shown why the church has not been very successful in soul winning through mission endeavors. This hinges on the kind of services church leaders give to the mission teams. As Paul said in Ephesians 6:12-13, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, principalities, authorities in heavenly realms.... Therefore, put on the whole armor of God.” Mission teams need to put on the whole armor of God in such mission preparation to fight battles of faith. This is done during training of the teams. Without this awareness, mission teams take this noble task with little seriousness. The trusted person who could ably bring that awareness and proper training is a church leader who had seminary training in mission and evangelism.

This chapter discusses responses from ten congregations within the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Malawi, actively involved in mission work. This section of the research has centered on finding out and analyzing the different thoughts on the responses from the questionnaires. The answers reflect what teams do in preparation for mission trips. It has also detected what teams have been following as traditional and proper ways of doing mission work. Teams have given genuine responses on what should now be done as teams continue with the work. They have a desire to make mission work a great adventure for the whole denomination and other denominations.

## 6.1 Research Findings

The research focused on finding out how mission teams are prepared in all areas needed for a successful mission, before the teams go to mission fields. The intention was to find out the extent to which church leaders from these congregations are involved in building spiritually strong teams, well armed for the battle against all forms of aggression towards the gospel, focusing on the biblical principles in mission and evangelism.

## 6.2 Knowledge of Biblical Principles

There were several questions which were formulated for members to give their response. One question was directed towards evaluating their understanding of biblical principles. The first question was whether they knew biblical principles in evangelism and mission. Out of the forty respondents, thirty showed that they do not know anything about biblical principles in mission and evangelism. Five respondents left a gap unfilled to show that they do not know. Five respondents felt they knew something about biblical principles in evangelism and mission. However, these five respondents gave divergent answers to the follow-up question which required them to list any two biblical principles. Two just gave Bible quotations of Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15-20. This was just a guess which they thought was right by mentioning the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, respectively. The other three respondents did not answer this second question. This is a clear indication that mission teams are not properly trained in this area. Two respondents honestly said that they had never heard about biblical principles. That

response sounded very strange to me. For such an answer to come from people who are involved in evangelism and mission but have no biblical backing to the task they do, is a very pathetic thing.

Mission teams showed little knowledge in biblical principles and practices when they responded to the question about their preparation for mission trips. There was so much that was expressed contrary to real needs in preparing for mission and evangelism. Out of forty respondents, only five mentioned prayer as an important part of preparation for mission trips. There was no respondent who mentioned Bible study, choice of the team members, distribution of labor, and training in different spiritual areas etc, as important areas of preparation. Thirty-eight respondents mentioned the need for good transportation systems, enough finances for the function, and good public address systems as important areas to be considered during preparation. Although these things are important, they cannot supersede the biblical principles and practices.

This deficiency in biblical principles is a clear indication that the church leaders themselves have no knowledge of the biblical principles mentioned here. This reflection gives a vivid picture of the kind of training which church leaders received during seminary years. This needs to be addressed immediately, for mission teams to operate within the right frame in evangelism and mission work, by intentionally revisiting the seminary curriculum in Missiology.

Another question in the questionnaire required respondents to state how members of the mission team were identified. In response, all respondents said that members go for mission on a voluntary basis. Anyone who was a member of the church and was free

during the time of mission and evangelism was welcome to join the team. There was no consistency in building up mission teams that were committed to continuing bringing the lost people to God every year with great seriousness and zeal for the Lord. The members of mission committees had the privilege to go on mission trip. In other words, they received first priority depending on the availability of transport.

The challenge in this area is that it can be hard to find people who are gifted in different areas to pursue a holistic ministry. This area requires redress by looking at the example given by the Lord Jesus Christ. He spent time in prayer in order to select people to become his disciples. Jesus had a mission for them to accomplish. In the same way, it is the responsibility of the church leader to choose people who have different talents to be incorporated into the mission team. This variation is very important. The different ministries within evangelism and mission team require people of different gifts to fulfill their God given opportunity for ministry. If this composition is missing in any team, then there are some activities which will not be done for lack of expertise in that field.

### 6.3 Assessment of the Training Undertaken Before Mission Trip

The analysis from the research findings is that ten respondents indicated that they received training before they went on a mission trip. However, they failed to substantiate the kind of training they received. In true assessment, these respondents were talking about meetings which they had before mission trip. These meetings were regarded as trainings to a certain extent, since the members were briefed on what to expect of them while in the mission field. There is no strict mention of church leaders' direct

involvement and interaction with mission teams as they prepared for evangelism and mission. It is evident from the research that Nkhoma Synod Mission' Office does not work very closely with congregations preparing mission teams. I guess that even if that opportunity would be there, they might not be able to thoroughly equip mission teams in biblical principles.

There is possibility of some forms of training to some mission teams not in a systematic way but as coaching sessions on how the team members are expected to operate and behave while in the mission field. Looking at the serious nature of the work ahead of the teams, congregations need to take strict measures in conducting practical formal training sessions in prayers, choosing and maintaining a core group, praying for the sick, leading people to Christ, preaching that should draw people to Christ, team coordination in the field and member participation throughout the whole process of evangelism.

Twelve respondents acknowledged the inadequacy of the training they receive before a mission trip and that they are not fully prepared them for a successful mission. These respondents were very honest enough in highlighting one of the reasons for little success in their mission activities year in year out. A simple training manual would be of great help to the mission teams since church leaders do not have the true knowledge in biblical principles and practices in evangelism and mission.

#### 6.4 Reasons why Mission Teams do not have Adequate Trainings

The twelve respondents have given clear reasons as to why the teams are poorly trained before they undertake a serious spiritual warfare of evangelism and mission.

Some arguments they have raised include: -

##### *6.4.1 Lack of Passion by Some Church Leaders*

In many congregations, the task of running evangelism and mission activities is left solely in the hands of the chairperson of mission committee. The pastor only gets reports on how things are going. The pastor might give advice and sometimes participate in the activities, but as an observer, not an insider. He is briefed on how things have been going on. He does have to approve the budget for evangelism and mission activities. Therefore, many mission committees work independent of the pastors in their congregations.

In other cases, pastors stay aloof from mission because of the control some chairpersons have over mission. Some have been chairpersons for over five years and have attained rigidity in their position. These leaders become a hindrance to a pastor's involvement in the affairs of the group. This, then, makes their desire for mission to die out as time goes by.



#### *6.4.2 Disconnect with Mission Office*

The entire CCAP Nkhoma Synod denomination has put in place a department to coordinate all mission activities. It is this office which has been given the mandate to monitor and train evangelists and oversee all mission activities from all congregations within Nkhoma Synod. Due to poor funding of this department, the department is not able to carry out some important activities related to their mandate. They might ask congregations which want to go for a mission trip to support them financially in order for them to do training. Hence, some congregations avoid the financial burden incurred when the mission department is invited.

Some other congregations have negative attitude towards mission office for no apparent reasons. Hence, they bypass them in mission activities. This is sad because if the mission teams are not built up spiritually, they are not fully prepared for the spiritual battle ahead of them.

#### *6.4.3 Incompetence of Some Pastors*

Incompetence of some pastors is one of the major factors why mission teams do not have the desirable training for evangelism and mission activities. As already reflected in chapter two, the seminary training did not prepare them well for mission work. Much of the work covered during such time was historical in nature, unable to fully prepare someone practically to be a missionary in his mind. Such lack of information becomes a disadvantage to the pastor when he starts ministering at a congregation where people are

zealous for mission. Instead, they just watch what the group is doing without giving them proper direction and guidance in doing mission work.

#### *6.4.4 Prioritization*

There are many mission committees which spend much of their time in resource mobilization and other logistics, giving little attention to the required training of its members. The team leaders who have been going to the mission field for some time feel that they would do well, as long as the resources are available.

Sometimes the mission team goes out to the field when the church is also involved with other activities requiring the same church leaders to take an active role. In other words, poor timing would make the group go to the mission field without acquiring the much-needed training in evangelism and mission.

#### *6.4.5 Lack of Discipleship*

The research has revealed a very serious weakness in doing mission. When evangelism has been done, there are no missionaries to continue with discipleship program with new believers in the mission field. Discipleship is teaching biblical precepts, while modeling and guiding others toward living righteously as followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>245</sup> Evangelism (sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ) is foundational in discipleship. Discipleship takes commitment, vision and understanding the Scriptures.

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<sup>245</sup> [www.aboutfollowingjesus.org](http://www.aboutfollowingjesus.org)

The church that is serious in mission considers discipleship as a great priority. Therefore, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod must lay a solid foundation in mission by training people to become disciples, who will be able to disciple others

### 6.5 People's Views on Required Improvements

The research has revealed that mission teams have little sense of their problem in doing evangelism and mission work. This needs to be redressed. The issues that the respondents have pointed out that require improvements, are trivial matters. Thirty-two respondents have expressed that financial support must receive first priority when preparing for a mission trip. One of the reasons given for the demand to increase funding for mission trips was that they could hire more vehicles to carry people to be involved in evangelism and mission work. For me, untrained personnel in mission, is a great waste of resources. Financial support to teams should be considered if the teams have genuine reasons for that such as extending the period of stay in the mission field.

One respondent said there is no need to increase funding. He agreed to the assumption that mission work is a waste of resources. The reason he gave was that the members of mission teams do not make contributions towards the required finances for mission trip. I realized that churches raise these funds in various ways to support mission work. Hence, once this money is designated for evangelism and mission, mission teams spend it the way they want with little accountability to the church when the teams come back from mission trips.

The second issue which received overwhelming response from respondents is the issue of transport. Thirty-six respondents have indicated that they go on mission with a group of thirty or more people. But their desire is that they could go with as many people as possible. The reason should be that they would like to involve as many singing groups as possible. However, the larger the group, the more resources they would need for their support during one trip.

On the issue of training mission teams before they go to the mission trip, only seven responded that this is important for every member in the team to realize the duties they would play while in the mission field. There was an indication that there were challenges in some areas like leading people to Christ, counseling new converts and what to do during follow-ups. This was an area which I felt was very important for consideration. It is sad that only few people identified this as an area which is crucial in evangelism and mission.

#### 6.6 Church's Deficiencies that need change

The respondents mentioned few things which require the attention of the church leadership for consideration to have meaningful evangelism and mission endeavors. Mission should be looked in two dimensions, home and foreign. Although the mission teams do not go miles and miles away from home, it is still foreign mission because they have moved away from their jurisdiction, crossing boundaries to new societies. There should be some differences already in terms of culture of the people from their community.

There is an outcry for mindset change. Respondents have noted that the church would effectively do mission if the whole church is involved in mission. Every member of the church should be empowered as a missionary. This would help evangelize their areas by way of life. When the teams go out for mission in a new community, they could not need too large a group. Few members would represent the entire church. The statement here means it is tiresome for the same group to embark on home and foreign mission at the same time. Hence, training would be paramount for such mindset change and involvement of all members in evangelism and mission, to take place. Training has to focus on the practical things each missionary should do. This is an important area worth considering in empowering mission teams and entire congregations.

Another area which respondents regarded as a deficient is lack of vision by church leadership. Mission work has to be done with a clear vision of where things are where the church wants to be in few years to come. This is indeed important because the vision would help in proper planning of what should be done to achieve the goal set by the church. In other words, mission is being done without focusing on what to achieve by the end of the mission trips. This mindset should start with pastors during their seminary training. The curriculum should empower them to influence congregations to participate in evangelism and mission with well informed mind. It is true as I quote John Maxwell that everything falls and rises on leadership. Moreover, in Malawi, a pastor is regarded as an individual who has to lead the church in everything. He is the chairperson of all the committees in the church to give advice and direction on how things should be done.

### 6.7 People's Attitude towards the Biblical Principles

Although people's attitude towards biblical principles has not been established directly from the research, the general impression is that people are looking forward to change that would improve the way they are doing evangelism and mission currently. It is true that it has been very difficult to establish the attitudes of mission teams towards biblical principles through the questionnaires since they had limited knowledge about these principles. It should be noted that all of the respondents except one said they had never heard about biblical principles. This is a good entry point to bring these mission teams to something familiar but necessary for transformation in evangelism and mission. The biblical principles will bring excitement and make a difference. Without any doubt, they will have the same excitement I had as I was introduced to these principles at International Theological Seminary. It will not just bring excitement but a new approach in evangelism and mission work to the glory of God.

### 6.8 Achievements of the Research

Through the questionnaires, the respondents have given enough information that indicate why there were years of unfruitful evangelism and mission work. The first achievement of this research is that it can be established without any doubt that there is lack of knowledge in biblical principles in evangelism and mission. Respondents have proved that they do not know biblical principles. This was a hundred percent response.

Another area which this research has revealed is that congregations do mission work without a vision and proper planning strategies for successful mission. This would be shown in the activities which would link up what has been done and what should be done next. Without this proper planning, it is possible for evangelism and mission work to bear little or no fruits for a long time.

All respondents have indicated three days as the maximum number of days they stay in the mission field. This can also be a contributing factor to fruitless mission endeavors. The time frame for mission work mentioned here is too short to disciple those who have surrendered themselves to become Christians. The whole team leaves the new Christians without any spiritual care and guidance. It would be good for some of the team members to remain behind for a time to organize and bring the new Christians together to start a new church. This cannot be done in three days.

Much more than follow-ups and leaving some members in the community would be to have permanent missionaries supported by the church. The missionaries could be a couple or couples who have a call to serve the Lord in the mission field. They should have good training on church planting and growing a young church. This could show that that church is visionary and serious in God's mission. Regular and timely visits by the sending church would reinforce mission work.

The research has also revealed the inactiveness of pastors in these congregations when it comes to training mission teams. Hence the outcry for lack of training has been established as a great need to be addressed as quickly as possible.

The research has also established lack of collaboration of congregations under Mission department in mission work. Previously, all congregations participated in mission work together through Mission department. One wonders why and what made congregations to break free from Mission department. This needs further investigation beyond this research.

### CONCLUSION

The research has brought insights beyond the previous assumptions which rendered evangelism and mission fruitless. Apart from lack of knowledge in biblical principles, the research has shown that number of days for doing mission should be considered. This would enhance relationship building and discipleship of the new believers. The research has indeed established several ways on what should be done to bring life and proper ways of doing evangelism and mission. I trust that by reviving the way evangelism and mission is done there will be great harvest in future. It is indeed God's work which requires God's intervention. However, it is necessary to do evangelism and mission by using biblical principles in order to be good fishers of men. It is not a surprise for me as an eyewitness of how evangelism and mission is done in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Malawi to receive these honest responses from the mission team respondents. In true sense, change is needed immediately.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This study has analyzed the curriculum content for Josophat Mwale Theological Institute seminary in mission and evangelism and the impact it has on leaders for the health and growth of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and other denominations in Malawi. The purpose was to find out the curriculum content and its practical application in the congregations in evangelism and mission through the seminary training which church leaders have in this field.

This chapter deals with recommendations which might help seminary training to be meaningful and practical to the church leaders who undergo through this training. The involvement of church leaders in training mission teams is vital for the health and growth of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and other denominations.

Seminary training should be a shared common problem among denominations in Malawi since all of them used one curriculum for training of church leaders for a long time as proved in chapter two. This research has shown how all denominations in Malawi would be unaware of biblical principles and practices in evangelism and mission, rendering mission work unproductive over the years.

Due to the research findings, the research has come up with specific recommendations to improve evangelism and mission work in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and other denominations in Malawi. These recommendations reflect what the research findings have revealed as deficiencies in evangelism and mission. The desire is to see a growing and healthy church that is biblically focused on evangelism and mission.

### 7.1 Revision of Seminary Curriculum in Missiology

This research has reviewed Josophat Mwale Theological Institute curriculum. The conclusion drawn from the analysis is that the curriculum content does not provide adequate material and methods to address the needs and shortfalls of the modern people. The content reflects much about what missionaries did from 1860 with the coming of the first Scottish missionary Dr. David Livingstone who opened the route for mission work in Malawi. Early missionaries to Malawi used different methods and strategies in winning people to the gospel such as opening village schools where people were introduced to reading and writing. They also used a strategy of winning the head of the society whose final word had authority for the whole society to follow. Societies are now disintegrated. People no longer take advice from their clan or society leaders' wholesale. These historical methods and strategies were important and useful in the past. Things have completely changed over the years.

The curriculum has failed to capture and motivate church leaders on how evangelism and mission should be done in our days. There are no practical steps which should be taken as the church is preparing for mission work. This could include having a

vision for mission and strategize how that could be carried out. Selection of individuals who could carry the task would be another necessary step. These individuals would receive necessary training and visit the area where mission work will be undertaken for needs assessment. These are important practical aspects which provide a good roadmap for the noble exercise. I recommend that a revised curriculum should be put in place. It should be very practical to the church leaders by using methods which are relevant in our days such as using holistic approach of ministering to people's needs.

Another area that has been overlooked is the emphasis on biblical principles as highlighted in the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Missionaries depended on prayer for successful mission. This is not reflected anywhere in the curriculum so that Malawian missionaries would deepen their trust in God through prayer life. The church leaders should be well equipped in this field before they go to the congregations.

Working with a small group of trusted people to groom them for a certain ministry has also not been indicated anywhere in the curriculum. Much as the pastor would pay attention to all church members, he needs to have an inner circle to carry out some duties which demand special skills. Missionaries were deployed to mission fields depending on expertise they had in different areas of need in the mission field, such as the clergy, doctors and nurses, home craft workers and teachers. This is not reflected anywhere in the curriculum. It would be ideal if church leaders would be empowered as today's missionaries to make disciples everywhere they go. This would help them make deliberate effort to disciple some individuals in the congregations. Having this core group would help them work effectively in the long run. I strongly believe that if the leaders

will have material ready for their task of training mission teams, ministry in the mission field will have no difficulties experienced these days.

The second issue in the same thought of curriculum revision is the revision of prescribed and recommended books. The seminary curriculum was formulated from books which are very old. It was understandable then when access to new literature was a challenge. There is so much material currently available, from trusted websites, on how to do evangelism and mission. I will be able to give recommendation on the latest books written by authentic writers in the field of mission. I hope with permission from my professor in missions, Rev. Dr. Dharmaraj, I will acquire and use his material in missions to benefit the church in Malawi at large.

## 7.2 Develop a Training Manual

The second recommendation I would like to make is that there should be a training manual available to all interested and those involved in evangelism and mission work. I will make it simple and practical. It will be in English and my vernacular language Chichewa. This manual will focus on the needed training before teams go out for mission. Some of the important topics in this manual will be: - (i) the Great Commission (ii) Mission and the mandate to the Church (iii) Making of Disciples of Christ (iv) Biblical principles in mission (v) Modern strategies in mission (vi) Challenges in mission (vii) Jesus, our example in mission (viii) importance of prayer, bible sharing, leading people to Christ (ix) Developing a new church (x) Leadership development in a new church. There will be emphasis in training new believers in biblical principles for

them to become missionaries when they have just made commitment as new believers. Each topic has a lot of substance to offer to the people in preparation for mission work.

### 7.3 In-service Training Program for Pastors

It would be necessary to teach the revised material to different groups of people to acquaint them with the content of the new curriculum. Since this is not a new trend in our church, it would be good to bring ministers together to provide the much-needed refresher course to all the pastors who graduated from the seminary some years back. It is an exercise which can be conducted using the Ly Training Center or in the presbyteries.

The outcome of such refresher courses should ignite a new look at evangelism and mission. These pastors who are entrusted with training mission teams in their congregations will play a great role in transforming the way evangelism and mission should be done throughout the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. If pastors will approach this change with positive minds, then biblical principles in evangelism and mission will make a great impact in the fruitfulness of evangelism and mission work.

### 7.4 Training Program for Mission Committees

Although church ministers will get the first priority in the training, it is also important to train mission teams. Mission Committees play a very important role in organizing mission outreaches. They mobilize resources for the function to take place. It

would be very ideal to consider training and empowering them to have a clear focus on what mission is all about and how best to strategize towards it.

It is mission committees who have the responsibility of recruiting missionaries to work for the Lord in the mission field. Therefore, they need to understand how this should be done as they will have another mandate of looking at the upkeep of the missionary in the mission field. Since this is a spiritual activity all mission committees need spiritual development.

The training can be done in two phases. Firstly, consider training the core group in every mission committee. These would have the responsibility of training the mission committee members and the entire congregation in mission.

The overall training can be carried out in regional groupings such as combining few presbyteries together at strategic locations. As of 2019 Bi-Annual Nkhoma Synod Assembly, there were 200 congregations<sup>246</sup>. As the church is growing all the time, we expect more new congregations by the time the project will be rolled out. This then means that it is not going to be a simple task to reach the leaders with the trainings in all the presbyteries. However, investing in them this treasure in mission would be one of the greatest things a church would do in equipping its members.

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247. CCAP Nkhoma Synod, *2019 Bi-Annual Assembly, List of congregations and ministers*, Nkhoma Press, Nkhoma, Malawi, 2019, ii-iv.

### 7.5 Linkups for Mission

One of the challenging things in mission is that churches do mission work independent of each other and of the Mission department of the CCAP denomination. It remains unknown to what extent is one congregation progressing in mission work. Efforts of all congregations under the CCAP Nkhoma Synod would bring substantive difference if human and financial resources would be put together for the common goal of evangelizing a particular area. Duplication of work is possible where no-one knows what the other is doing. I would therefore ask for corporation of all congregations under the CCAP Nkhoma Synod to think once again for such unity under Mission department. This spells out personal achievements and fame in doing God's work.

There are a number of advantages for the corporation. The local resources available and put together, would make a visible impact at the end of the exercise. This would also help Mission department to strategize their outreaches. One area would be targeted and be reached with the gospel in full swing, making sure that everything has been put in place for the mission of God to be successfully done. There will be enough human resource that would be used in the mission field after scrutinizing the skills and talents of the people who have a calling for this ministry. Training such a group would possibly bring the desirable results in mission.

Another category for link ups would be with international organization doing mission work worldwide. There are people who are diploid globally to new lands by mission organizations and need the support of local churches in establishing churches and nurture new believers in such areas where there were no churches. This connection would

help in discipleship training of the members to be involved in mission. The lives of the new believers should be impacted by those who minister to them the word of God. Since this is a process, the presence of the old believers is crucial in nurturing, guiding and maturing the new believers for them to disciple others too (2 Tim. 2:2).

### 7.6 Recruitment and Training of Missionaries

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod and many churches in Malawi have lost the vision of mission. There are no training programs for missionaries. Although churches have zeal for mission, the research has established that there have been no missionaries to take charge of the lives that come to the Lord during evangelism. This is a very important step for discipleship of the new believers. It is through discipleship that people become fully committed followers of Christ. Believers grow in their faith to grow in maturity and wisdom so that they too can lead others to Christ.<sup>247</sup> The church needs to take evangelism and discipleship seriously if the church is to grow through mission endeavors. No successful mission can be achieved by the church without well trained people in mission. There should be people who have a call from God and are committed to the cause of Christ Jesus in their daily life and walk with Him. By their life and example in word and deed, they impact the lives of many people around them in the mission field.

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248. [www.justdisciple.com](http://www.justdisciple.com)



## CONCLUSION

With or without the research, it is undisputable fact that efforts in evangelism and mission have been unproductive for many years by the CCAP Nkhoma Synod congregations. There is no question that this trend has affected the healthy growth of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod for many years. It was therefore necessary to carry out this research which has revealed the root cause of the issue as poor seminary training of ministers in evangelism and mission reflected in the curriculum content.

Secondly, through a review of scholarly works on the subject of evangelism and mission, we are able to learn a lot of areas which require to be addressed to successfully do evangelism and mission by following biblical principles. This has been a great eye opener for a bright and successful future of the church in evangelism and mission. The Scriptures have proved that Jesus Christ, the first missionary, used strategies and principles in evangelism and mission, which are up to date. Lack of exposure to books and other relevant materials on evangelism and mission kept the CCAP Nkhoma Synod lagging behind.

The research has suggested training at different levels of the church in biblical principles as one remedy for unproductive evangelism and mission work. Therefore the whole church is challenged to work up and use the model set up by the Lord Jesus Christ. The emphasis has been laid on seminary training because pastors take a leading role in trainings at congregational level. Mission teams look to the pastor for correct guidance in evangelism and mission. Hence the curriculum review is a very important process to move towards a transformed church in evangelism and mission.

However, this research is not conclusive. It opens up for further future investigations in the same topic until lasting solutions to the problems in mission are fully identified and addressed, for the healthy growth of the church and to the glory of God.

## Appendix

### FIGURE 1: The questionnaire QUESTIONNAIRE FOR QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Name: ..... (Optional)

Congregation.....

Gender.....

Role in the church

Circle an answer that describes what you do most in mission.

1. How often have you been involved in mission outreaches?

A. Once. B. Twice. C. Every year for 5 years. D. None

.....

2. What role do you play in mission?

A. Preacher B. Intercessor C. Singer D. Admin E. Others

.....

3. What activities do you do in preparing for a mission outreach?

A. Meetings B. Prayers C. Teachings D. Fund raising E. None

.....

4. What has been the average number of people per trip?

A. Less than 10. B. Below 20. C. Over 30 D. Not sure

.....

5. What challenges do you have as you prepare to go for a mission outreach?

A. Finances B. Coordination C. Equipment D. None

.....

6. Explain the orientation you have on mission before going for an outreach.

A. Preaching B. Leading people to Christ. C. Prayer D. None

.....

7. How many days do you spend on Mission field?

A. Two B. Three. C. One week D. One month

.....

8. What successes have you seen in Mission work?

Explain.....

.....

9. What challenges do you face in the Mission field? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

10. What things do you think should be improved in Mission work?

.....

.....

.....

11. Have you ever heard of biblical principles in Missions? If yes describe any two.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Some congregations view Mission work as a waste of resources. Do you agree or not? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

13. What is your main focus in Missions?

A. Saving souls B. Infrastructure C. Discipleship D. All

.....

.....

.....

14. Do you have time to evaluate the Mission trip when you return?

A. Yes B. No C. Rarely D. At times

.....

.....

.....

15. How do you assess the impact of the Mission trip?

A. Number of people who accept Jesus B. Follow-up C. Numbers attending rallies D. Numerical growth of the church membership

.....

.....

.....

16. What kind of training and preparation do you think would help your mission trip?.....

.....

.....

.....

God bless you for responding to this survey!!

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